

**A voice from Richmond, and other addresses to
children and youth. By the late Rev. Robert May. With a
brief account of the author**

Engr. by M. Schmitz. T. Sinclair Lith Philad a . BURNING of the THEATRE in RICHMOND,
V A 26 Dec r . 1811

VOICE FROM RICHMOND, AND Other Addresses TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

BY THE LATE REV. ROBERT MAY.

WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR.

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3

PREFACE.

The Rev. Robert May was born at Woodbridge, in the county of Suffolk, (England,) in 1790; and at the age of sixteen we find him a pupil in the Missionary Seminary at Gosport, (England.) He says of himself, that when he “was about seven or eight years of age he was deeply impressed with his lost state as a sinner, by reading ‘Janeway’s Token for Children.’ The address at the beginning of the book, and the example in the first part, made a deep impression on his mind.” During one of his vacations he joined two of his school-mates in a weekly visit of charity to the parish poor-house, and while there his heart was moved 4 with pity for the children who were at play in the yard, and for whose souls none seemed to care. Young May invited them to come into the house, and hear what was said to the sick people. They were much pleased with the notice that he took of them, especially as most of them were either orphans or friendless children, and seldom received such attention. Several of them followed him into the house, who were soon joined by others, and they were all very still and attentive to what was said.

So pleasant and useful was the impression made on their minds by this exercise, that it was regularly repeated for several weeks. Mr. May was encouraged by the success of this effort to extend his labours, and in the course of the four following years his lectures were attended by upwards of three thousand children.

5

In December, 1810, he embarked for India, by way of the United States, and arrived at Philadelphia in March, 1811. He addressed large assemblies of children on two or three occasions, and re-embarked in May, but meeting a heavy gale of wind, which occasioned damage to the ship, he returned to Philadelphia to await a more favourable opportunity for a voyage to India.

Library of Congress

He soon re-commenced his course of lectures, which were attended by many hundreds of children; and he continued them until he finally embarked for India, where he arrived in August, 1812. He laboured faithfully for six years in that pagan land, and on the 11th of August, 1818, he fell asleep in Jesus, and entered into the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

During the closing hours of his severe illness, his mind wandered, but even then 1* 6 his thoughts were evidently turned towards the Saviour; for when he fancied some one had brought him a rich present of gold and silver, he refused it, saying, "I want none of your gold and silver, it is the Lord Jesus Christ whom I want." He was a man of a truly catholic spirit, and mourned over every appearance of alienation and bitterness among Christians. He was also remarkable for his mildness and evenness of temper, which was one cause of the love which children felt for him.

The following lectures have been carefully revised; the typographical arrangement improved, and some embellishments added, under the impression that there are few books better adapted to illustrate and enforce the great principles of religion and morality upon the minds of young children.

7

CONTENTS.

Lecture Page

I.—A Voice from Richmond 9

II.—Divine Arithmetic 33

III.—David's Dying Advice to his Son 53

IV.—Advantages of an Early Love to Jesus 73

Library of Congress

- V.—The Character of the Child's best Friend 101
- VI.—Christ in the Temple 125
- VII.—The Good Child's Petition 149
- VIII.—The Way to be Wise 173
- IX.—Danger of Bad Company 195
- X.—Obedience to Parents 215
- XI.—Duties of the School 235
- XII.—A Word in Season; or, Death and Judgment 255
- XIII.—The Missionary's Farewell 280

9

A VOICE FROM RICHMOND.

LECTURE I. *A Voice from Richmond.*

Rom. vi. 21.—“ *For the end of those things is death.* ”

My dear young friends,

You are come, this afternoon, to improve the awful calamity which happened about five weeks ago at Richmond, in Virginia,* with the particulars of which 9

* The following brief narrative of the calamity is authentic:

It took place on the night of the 26th of December, 1811. The theatre, which was built entirely of wood, and otherwise badly constructed, stood upon the brow of Shockhoe hill,

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and upon the very spot—which is now the site of what is called the Monumental Church. On this night, particularly, a new play and pantomime had been got up, and a large and brilliant crowd of gentlemen and ladies, of the very flower of the population, embracing the newly elected governor of the Commonwealth, and many citizens of wealth and fashion, were assembled at an early hour to enjoy the entertainments of the evening. It was truly a brilliant display; and, for some time, all went on gayly and happily enough. The play was over—the first act of the pantomime had passed by—the second and last was now begun—and all eyes were intently fixed upon the actor, who had come forward on the stage towards the lights, and was moving, to the music of the orchestra—when suddenly a bustling noise was heard from behind the scenes, towards the rear of the building. This, it seems, was occasioned by the fact that a servant who had been ordered to hoist up a chandelier, in doing so had got the rope entangled, and jerking to clear it, had swung it against one of the painted scenes, which instantly caught fire, and sent up a sheet of flame to the roof. This was not plastered, but consisting only of rafters covered with light pine boards and shingles, very dry, it kindled at once; and the actors, with their assistants, were trying to tear down the scenes, to put out the fire. This movement, however, was not immediately seen by the spectators, being hidden from their view by the interposing scene; and they were still watching the progress of the piece, when they saw a shower of sparks and burning matter fall upon the actor before them. At this some were startled, while others apparently thought that it might be only a part of the show. A moment afterwards, some one exclaimed, “There is no danger,” and only forced the sense of it more strongly upon their fears; when one of the performers rushed forward to the front of the stage, and cried, “the house is on fire,”—pointing at the same time to the ceiling, where the fire was now seen running like lightning along the roof. Instantly, all was horror and dismay. The cry of “fire!” “fire!” rang through the building, mingled with the shrieks of women and children, in frantic consternation. Husbands looked for their wives—mothers for their children—while some, almost frenzied by the sense of danger, thought only of themselves.

Library of Congress

There was, of course, a general rush of all at once to escape out of the house as fast as possible, by the nearest way. Those in the pit easily got to the outer door, which was not far off. Those in the galleries also, or most of them, flying down the stairs, soon passed into the street. But the spectators in the boxes were not so fortunate. Some few of them, indeed, had leaped into the pit, and got out with the rest from that part, and a few others had been helped on to the stage, and hurried off the back way; while a small number still bravely kept their seats, only to meet the fate which they hoped to avoid; but the great mass of them, crowding tumultuously into the narrow lobbies, in the wildest disorder, stopped each others' progress towards the door, while the suffocating smoke, which soon filled the house, extinguished the lights and stifled its victims; and the flames, which now flashed in lurid sheets, as they ran along the light wooden work of the boxes, caught the clothes of the fugitives in the rear, and wrapped them at once in palls of fire and death. Happy now were those who had reached the windows, where a stream of fresh air from without revived their failing senses, and enabled them to hurry on for their lives, or to escape perhaps to the ground. For by this time, many of those who had got out from the pit and galleries were seen gathered in crowds below, stretching out their arms, and calling on those within to leap into them for safety. Some did so from the first, and some even from the second story; and a number escaped in this way, while a few were either killed, or shockingly mangled by the fall. Those, in the meantime, who had succeeded so far as to clear the lobbies, found themselves again stopped, and straitened in the narrow angular stairs that ran from the landing of the boxes into the common entry, or pent up in the small passage at the bottom, where the only door which opened inwards had been shut to by the rushing crowd, and could not be forced back for some time, even by the help of hands from without. Here, then, some were crushed to death by others, who, even less happy, escaped at last over their dead bodies, through the door now opened, but horribly scorched or burnt, and only to die in the arms of their shuddering friends.

By this time, (although only six or seven minutes had passed,) the whole house was in a light blaze, that brightened the windows of the houses far and near with its dismal light; the

Library of Congress

bells were tolling with most appalling sound; and hundreds of citizens, roused from their beds, and alarmed for the safety of their relatives and friends, were rushing to the scene, but too late to save, or find them. The rest may be imagined, but cannot, and perhaps ought not to be described. There was no sleep in Richmond that night; but the voice of weeping was heard from many dwellings.

The day after this awful occurrence, the Common Council of the city convened, and passed a resolution prohibiting all public amusements within the limits, for four months ensuing; and a meeting of citizens was held in the capitol, at which it was resolved, that the remains of the dead should be collected and buried together on the spot where they had expired; and that a monument should be raised over them to record the remembrance of their fate. And it was also determined, that a day should be set apart for fasting, humiliation, and prayer, in commemoration of an event, in which all who had any sense of piety could not but see and acknowledge, that the hand of God had been most strikingly and affectingly displayed.

10 you are but too well acquainted. Would to God they were less mournful, and the young and lovely sufferers less numerous.

In the long list of the dead and missing 11 we find no less than thirty-six young persons, in the prime of life, lovely as morning rose buds, and fair as the flowers of spring. And to this list, I believe, may 12 be added, six dear little children, who perished in the flames. The exact number of persons, young and old, ill perhaps never be ascertained, but it is supposed 13 to be nearly two hundred! Let us pause— Is it true? Or did I only dream, that thirty-six young persons perished in the flames? Did I read that 2 14 five or six children lost their lives in the burning ruins of the theatre at Richmond? What must their parents feel? I think I see their burnt and mangled bodies, 15 wrapped carefully up, and carried to their houses of mourning from the house of mirth. I see them but in part. Their half burnt bodies and their smoking bones! I pity them, but they are now beyond my pity! I could weep with

Library of Congress

weeping parents, and sympathize with sorrowful brothers and sisters, but they cannot see my tears.

“O may our sympathizing breasts That gen'rous pleasure know, Kindle to share in others' joy, And weep for others' wo.”

Their remains are now deposited in the house appointed for all living. Their ashes rest in peace, within the silent tomb. There they will be undisturbed, till that trump shall sound which shall call the dead to arise and come to judgment.

16

Hark! from the eternal world, I hear a voice! To you, my dear young friends, that voice is directed. Methinks the departed spirit of one of those dear children is now before me:— Attend to the solemn admonition.

“I have a message from God unto you. Shun the theatre: avoid the haunts of Satan, the destroyer of your souls. Seek for real pleasure. Do not pursue the phantom of imaginary happiness, which will at last deceive you. It may seem to be delightful, it appeared the same to me, but I now find that I have been fatally mistaken. My sun went down while it was yet day. How awful the change! From the meridian splendour of a noonday sun, to be suddenly enveloped in midnight darkness! Yes, with the blackness of darkness forever! Five weeks ago, I was in life, blooming, healthy and gay. I thought, like many others, that there was no harm in attending on the amusements of the theatre, and from persuasion and example I was confirmed in 17 my opinion. That very afternoon, I laughed at a young lady for saying that ‘the theatre was a very improper place; that many had been ruined, body and soul, by attending at such places of amusement.’ Ah, my young friends, I wish I had felt the force of her observation. I went. I expected pleasure, and for a short time I joined the laugh of those around me, and mingled my smiles with their shouts of applause. The whole scene was before us; all around was mirth and pleasure; but in two minutes after, I was surrounded with cries of anguish and despair. Suffocated with smoke, I fainted

Library of Congress

and fell, blazing, into the pit, and was crushed and covered with the burning ruins. I was unprepared for death, and hurried unexpectedly into eternity. My state is now unalterably fixed forever." Attend to the warning. Behold the displeasure of a holy God. Profit by the warning thus awfully given, and remember that "the end of these things is death." 2*

18

"See the short course of vain delight, Closing in everlasting night; In flames that no abatement know, Though briny tears forever flow."

Let us inquire, or rather speak of those things, the end of which is sometimes death. It is not necessary what things those are, in particular, that the apostle means. It is sufficient to say, that he means all kinds of sinful pleasures in general: all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. These things are not from God, but from man, from the world.

1. There are sports in which the young engage, which sometimes prove, in the end, to be both temporal and eternal death; I mean those which employ the leisure hours of the thoughtless and wicked child. At this season of the year, when you are in the habit of skating on the weak ice, it breaks under you, and you have no time or warning to escape from being buried in a watery grave. Sailing on the water in a boat, conducted by unskilful managers: 19 swinging, when the rope is not well secured on the beam, or on the branch of a tree, nor sufficiently strong: climbing a lofty tree: walking on the roof of a house &c., in many such ways you may receive a fall, the end of which may be death. A few months ago, a little boy fell from the roof of a house, and was killed on the spot. Bathing is extremely healthy, only you should take care not to go in too far, for fear of being out of your depth; you should not stop in the water too long at once, and never bathe when you are warm. Balancing upon a plank laid across a tree or piece of timber sometimes proves dangerous, for when the plank slips, the balance is lost; and the child that is hoisted up may fall and hurt himself. The pleasures of the dancing-room are also dangerous. Let me ask you why you learn to dance? It may be answered, "that I may know how to behave in a

Library of Congress

polite company, that I may know how to enter a room and leave it in a suitable manner; 20 that I may be able to make an elegant courtesy, or a graceful bow.”

Cannot these be learned without spending so much time?

“But where is the harm of dancing?”

The only harm that I can see in the thing itself is, that time is wasted which might be much better employed. It is not the dancing only, but it is the time it consumes, the company to which it leads, the health which it destroys; it is that the mind is taken from things of greater importance.

2. The follies of the card table. There are different kinds of cards. There are playing cards, and these are most generally used. There are conversation cards. There are geographical, and puzzling cards; and there are Scripture cards. You may not be acquainted with all these different kinds of cards, but I have seen them all. Playing cards are those used in card parties in general, and they are the cards which are the most useless, waste the most time and the most property.

21

“Well, but there is no harm in them, if we do not play for money?”

Yes, there is harm; it is a kind of silent gaming, which has often ended in poverty, misery, shame and death. There are conversation cards, but there are different kinds of them; some of which are more fit for the fire than for the amusement of the young. Some of them contain useful and entertaining questions, which are answered in such an interesting manner as to give pleasure to all who use them.

3. There are geographical cards, which are very useful and improving to the young. For example, a geographical card contains a geographical question, and this is answered by a card which gives a short description of the country, extent, boundaries, rivers, population,

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capital, curiosities, &c. Puzzling cards are sometimes very amusing and entertaining indeed, as each card contains an emblem or representation, and is the name of some animal, flower, country, nation, or trade. There are Scripture cards, which are suitable for those 22 children who love their Bibles, and who love their Saviour and their Maker. They contain some interesting questions or passage of Scripture. All these kinds, except the first, will improve your minds, extend your knowledge, and promote useful conversation; while, at the same time, you are amused and entertained in a delightful manner. But how persons who have souls to be saved can spend so much time in throwing down and taking up pieces of painted paper, is indeed truly wonderful. What conversation passes at the card table, how insignificant, how trifling, how non-sensical, how sinful and wicked, when the same time might be usefully employed!

4. The amusement of the theatre.—Here, my young friends, I shall have reason to rejoice if I can but prevent one of you from attending at this destructive place. O, to save one soul from infamy and ruin would give me more pleasure than to gain ten thousand worlds!

It has been said, that the theatre is a useful school, in which persons may learn 23 much, if they please. Much of what? Much of evil; much of vice. Tell me what the lessons are that are taught in a theatre? Is not the holy name of Jehovah trifled with, blasphemed and profaned? Tell me of one rake reformed in a theatre, and I will tell you of a thousand who have been made the most abandoned rakes by it. Tell me of one drunkard who has been made sober at the theatre, and I will tell you of a thousand who have been made drunkards there. Tell me of one spend-thrift who has been taught at the theatre to be careful of his character, his time, and money, and I will tell you of many who have been taught to be careless of their time and their property. Tell me if at the theatre the heart is made better, or the mind improved, and I will tell you that many learn their worst vices in a theatre, that hearts have been more depraved there than they were before, and the mind is polluted there by poison the most deadly.

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It has been said, that many good sentiments may be heard at the theatre; but 24 for one good one that you hear, there are hundreds, nay, thousands of sentiments that are evil. The sentiments contained in plays are either immoral or impure. That there are some few good sentiments, I do not deny; but the heart is so depraved that it is prone to that which is evil and averse to that which is good.

Some say, it is a harmless diversion; an innocent amusement. This I deny. The scenes and amusements of the theatre are not so. When the play is over, you are unfit for serious reflection, the mind is dejected, weakened, relaxed and injured. Are there not amusements more rational, better suited to an immortal mind, and less expensive too?

“But,” says one, “you call the theatre a bad place, and endeavour to persuade us not to go. I have heard that a person may learn as much by seeing a good play, as by hearing a good sermon.”

A *good* play, did you say? There are none good, no, not one. Virtue is painted in an angel's form and Vice wears the 25 shape of the devil. Religion is ridiculed, and serious things treated with mockery and contempt. Can you learn at a theatre that the heart is deceitful? That your natures are depraved? That man is not what he was when he came from the hands of his Creator? Did you ever hear at a theatre that you were poor, lost and guilty sinners; that without a Saviour, without pardon of sin and holiness of heart, you must be miserable forever?

“But,” says another, “it is a place of diversion, and we are not always to be thinking about religion; we should be poor, moping, melancholy creatures, if we were always thinking on that which is good.”

True, it is a place of diversion, a place of sinful pleasure and of guilty joy, where you feast your eyes with evil, your ears with profaneness, your hearts with impurity and sin. All your depraved passions are excited to the uttermost.

Library of Congress

Are there no pleasures equal to those of a theatre? Can an immortal soul be satisfied with such vain delights? There 3 26 are no pleasures equal to those which religion and early piety can give. These are suitable, solid, innocent and lasting. They will bear repeating, they will endure forever.

"I do not go often to the theatre."

But why go at all? A play is such a bewitching, captivating thing, that when you have been once, you will want to go again. The eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing.

"If I do go, I will take care to sit where I can easily escape."

But however good your situation may be, you may be prevented from escaping. Where you think yourself most secure, you may be in the greatest danger.

"But there are no less than 'sixteen ways' of escape, if the theatre should take fire; the doors open 'outward and inward,' so that there would be no danger."

Notwithstanding all these doors and windows, you may be in danger. You do not consider, that upon the alarm of fire, what confusion, what agitation of 27 mind follows on such occasions. If all these means of safety could be employed, yet such would be the state of mind, that amidst the bustle they would be forgotten. Drury Lane theatre, in London, was burnt, notwithstanding every means used to prevent it. It would be almost a miracle if all these doors could be opened, and amidst the crowd and hurry of escape some were not beaten down, and trodden under foot. Who so likely as the fainting female, or the little boy? and if one life were lost, can you tell that it would not be yours?

"But my parents, my companions go; they think there is no harm, no danger in attending the theatre, why should I? I shall be as safe as they; do you think they would go if there was any harm or danger!"

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Too many persons think only of the pleasure, and forget the pain; if they can taste the sweet of a play, they run the hazard of swallowing the bitter with it. So intent were the inhabitants of Richmond on the pleasures of the theatre, that 28 they forgot those means of safety which might have been provided. They were thoughtless of the danger. They delayed to open new doors, to make the narrow winding staircase, open, straight, and wide: they “trusted and were ruined!” They perished at last, as they think, by their own neglect; but it was the hand of God alone.

“But to suppose the worst, and I should lose my life and perish in the flames, I am safe after all. I shall go to heaven. I read these words, written by a gentleman at Richmond —‘Yes, all Richmond is in tears; children have lost their parents, parents have lost their children. Yesterday, a beloved daughter gladdened my heart with her innocent smiles. Today she is in heaven. God gave her to me, and God—yes, it has pleased Almighty God to take her from me. O sir, feel for me; and not for me only. Arm yourself with fortitude, whilst I discharge the mournful duty of telling you, that you have to feel also for yourself. Yes, for it must be told, you also were the father of 29 an amiable daughter, now, like my beloved child, gone to join her mother in heaven. O moment of inexpressible horror! Nothing I can say can paint the awful, shocking, maddening scene. The images of both my dear children were before me; but I was removed by an impassable crowd from the dear sufferers. The youngest, with gratitude to Heaven I write it, sprang towards the voice of her father, reached my assisting hand, and was extricated from the overwhelming mass that soon choked the passage by the stairs; but no efforts could avail me to reach, or even gain sight of the other. And my dear, dear Margaret, and your sweet Mary, with her companions, Miss G * * * * and Miss G * * * * *, passed together and at once into a happier world.”

Whatever influence these expressions may have upon your minds, it is my duty to remove them. The young persons here spoken of are unknown to me; but if they were like other young persons who generally attend the amusements of the 3* 30 theatre, however

beautiful or lovely in their person, however amiable in their disposition, and moral in their conduct, yet, if they were strangers to the grace of God; if their hearts were not renewed and their sins pardoned; if they were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, my Bible tells me, they are not in heaven. The fondness of a parent's love may think, or rather wish them there, but if they were not beloved by their heavenly Father, as well as their earthly parents, they are not the inhabitants of that place, where "there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore." They might be ignorant of the danger of attending a theatre; but I think no pious parents would permit their children to attend at a place so dangerous and injurious to their morals, their reputation, and their souls.

It is the duty of parents to put their children in mind of these things. I would much rather meet death in any other place than a theatre. Therefore, my young friends, take heed; be not carried away 31 with the hasty expressions of mourning, affectionate parents: "Be not deceived; whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall also reap; for he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; and he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

And now, my dear young friends, let me earnestly exhort you to seek such amusements as are healthy, innocent, and useful: but avoid, as you would a serpent, the amusement of the theatre.

The haunts of the theatre lead down to the gates of eternal death; but the ways of religion "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

O then, my dear young friends, be not partakers in the sins of others, lest God, in his awful displeasure, should make you partakers in their punishment. Remember that, whatever you may think, the word of God says "the end of these things is death." It has been so in the awful experience of many—death to the body, and eternal death to the soul.

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"Children, awake, nor slumbering lie Amidst the gloomy haunts of death; Perhaps the awful hour is nigh That takes away your parting breath.

"That awful hour will soon appear; Swift on the wings of time it flies: When all that pains or pleasures here Will vanish from your closing eyes.

"Death calls your friends, your parents hence, None can resist the fatal dart; Continual voices strike your sense, And shall they fail to reach your heart?

"Shall gay amusements rise between, When scenes of horror spread around? Death's pointed arrows fly unseen, But ah, how sure, how deep they wound!

"Think, dear young friends, how much depends On the short period of a day; Shall time, which Heaven in mercy lends, Be negligently thrown away?

"Insure your nobler life on high, Life from a dying Saviour's blood! Then, though your minutes swiftly fly, They bear you nearer to your God."

33

LECTURE II. *Divine Arithmetic.*

Psalm xc. 12.—“ *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* ”

My young Friends,

Time is short, eternity will last forever. Youth and beauty are but fading flowers. Health is the greatest blessing we can enjoy. Therefore, let us improve the morning of life. Youth is indeed a time of harvest. In it, you may reap an abundant crop of real pleasure and useful knowledge. Now it is summer time with my dear young friends, but remember that the

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winter of old age will soon approach. Make your hay while the sun shines. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

Time is represented as a little old man with a bald head, except a lock of hair ³⁴ on the forehead, intimating that we should improve the present moment, for when it is past, it cannot be laid hold of.

"One lock in front the ancients placed; The head behind was bald, To show that time, when once 'tis past, Can never be recalled."

He has also an hour-glass and a scythe, beside him or in his hand, all of which are to remind us that all things beneath the sun are transitory and swiftly pass away.

We are told that time has four eyes, two before and two behind, two of which are always open and two are shut, to denote that time regards what is past as well as what is to come.

Time is also painted with four wings, two stretched out as if he was flying, and two lying close to his back, as if he was standing still.

Time and tide, the proverb says, stay for no man. You may think that there is time enough yet to think of religion, death and eternity; but remember how ³⁵ much there is to do, and how short a space of time there may be in which to do so great a work. Bad children are in general very great wasters of time. As every shred of gold is precious, so is every moment of time. Make good use of your time, if you wish to be happy in eternity. Yesterday cannot be recalled. Seize time by the forelock.

To-morrow is not yours; to-day is all that you can call your own, which, if you delay, you lose; and when lost it is lost forever. One day present, is worth two to come. Time is given us that we may prepare for eternity, and eternity will not be too long to regret the loss of our time, if we have mispent it. Time is one of those blessings which we want most, but use the worst, and for which we must give an account when time shall be no more.

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A very rich, but a very wicked man, who died in England some years ago, with his last agonizing breath cried out, "Twenty thousand pounds for a week, 36 sixty thousand for a day, and an hundred thousand for an hour." With these awful but unavailing expressions on his lips, he expired, leaving behind him a solemn warning to all to redeem their time. O my dear young friends, let us turn the words of our text into a prayer, and say with Moses, that holy man of God, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

I. Let us look at the school in which this holy art of numbering our days is taught. The only school in which we can learn to number our days, improve our time, and apply our hearts to true wisdom, is the present world. It is in this life only that we can seek the salvation of the soul, and by the Spirit of God be prepared for eternal life in the world to come.

In what respects does this world resemble a school?

In a school different branches of education are taught. It is there that children are instructed to speak properly, to think closely, to hear attentively, to read correctly, 37 and to copy faithfully whatever is laid before them for imitation. In the world, different examples of evil and good are before our eyes, and those who cannot read books can read lives, and though unable to copy a single letter in the alphabet, yet they can and do follow the examples of others, and tread in the steps of playmates, school-fellows and parents. Youth are too apt to follow a bad example rather than a good one. This world is a place of learning, and its inhabitants are growing wiser every day.

In a school, children are under some restraint. It is so in the present world. What a great regard have many for the opinion of the world. Many there are who would not be ashamed to sin openly, were it not for fear of what the world would say of them.

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In a school, children are divided into different classes. The world, or the people in it, are divided by the Bible into two great classes, the righteous and the wicked, or the good and the bad. 4

38

In a school, there is sometimes much noise and bustle, especially in coming in and going out. So it is with many persons, there is much noise and bustle when they enter this world, and when they go out.

In a school, the scholars frequently remove and others fill their places. So it is in the present world, one generation passeth away and another cometh.

In a school, there is a vacation or holiday when children usually rest from their lessons and duties for a time. At death, when persons leave the present world, they rest from all their toils and all their labours; they die and go to their long home.

“Tis God has placed us in this school, Where every lesson of his grace And all the discipline and rule Prepare us for a heavenly place.”

II. Inquire for the Teacher. The art of numbering our days is a holy art, and can be taught only by a divine teacher. It is heavenly wisdom to which we are to apply our hearts, and this can only be done by the assistance of a divine teacher. It 39 is the Lord alone that can give us time. It is to him that we must give an account of a talent so precious, and it is He alone that can teach by his Spirit how to improve it. Happy, my dear young friends, will it be for you to have such a Teacher as the Spirit of the Lord.

It is the Lord alone that can teach us the true value of our time. We are often reminded in the word of God of the shortness of time. “What is your life?” saith the apostle; “it is even as a vapour which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.” Remember the time is short. Redeem the time, because the days are evil. God, who is liberal in all other blessings, teaches us by the wisdom of his providence how careful we ought to be in the

Library of Congress

improvement of our time. God never gives two moments together. He gives us only the second as he takes away the first, and keeps the third moment entirely in his own power, and we are left in an absolute uncertainty whether he will give it to us or not.

40

"To-day improve," is Wisdom's voice, "To-morrow," Folly cries; And still to-morrow 'tis; when oh! To-day the sinner dies.

III. The scholars are mentioned next in the words of the text. So teach *us*. One is saying, Lord, teach me, and another is saying, Lord, teach me, and a third is saying, Lord, teach me. But this is what you ought to say, Lord, teach us all. The scholars are very numerous; what a noble company of scholars do I see before me at this time, and attentive ones too. There are not only a few hundreds or a few thousands, but the children in the universe are scholars in this school; and though it is so very large, yet the Lord is able to teach you all without the assistance of any other teacher. But though the Lord does not stand in need of any assistant teacher, yet, like other teachers, he thinks fit to make use of a monitor in this large school.

Now I think I hear a whisper, "Who is the monitor? who is the monitor?" I will tell you, my dear young friends. The 41 name of the monitor is Conscience. By him we are reminded of the shortness of time, and the account that we must give, to the great Teacher and Master of assemblies, of the manner in which it has been spent. And by this monitor we are frequently sharply reproved for the many hours and days that have been wasted in idleness and sinful delight.

O what a sad report does this monitor give to the Teacher, concerning many of the scholars in this school!

Some are obstinate scholars; some are dull scholars; some are hard-hearted scholars; some are very careless, and take no pains at all to improve their time; but there are a few who seem desirous of numbering their days and applying their hearts unto wisdom. They

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appear serious and thoughtful, and may soon be distinguished from the other scholars in this school.

The only school book made use of in this school, is the Bible. The copy you should imitate is a good example, and the 4* 42 arithmetic they study is divine. This is the song of the scholars—

“Well, if our days must run, We'll keep their end in sight, We'll spend them all in wisdom's way, And let them speed their flight.”

IV. I come next to consider the education spoken of in the text; that is, what you have to learn. This I shall divide into two branches.

1st. The art of numbering our days. That you may do it aright, let us begin by *enumerating* the mercies you have received.

How many are the days and nights that you have been preserved! God has blessed you with health and strength; with food and clothing; with kind and indulgent parent. To some of you, God has given pious parents, by whose prayers and instructions you have been blessed; and they have given you a suitable education. You have been taught a variety of the useful and ornamental branches of education. Some of you have been blessed 43 with pious teachers, and have been taught the principles of that religion which alone can make you happy in this life and in the life to come. Many of you not only enjoy every necessary, but the delicacies and comforts of life, and even the superfluities of life. Many are the religious advantages that you enjoy; you hear the gospel of Jesus; you can read the word of God; Jesus is ready to be your best friend, the Holy Spirit waits to teach you, and God himself will be your guide. Even this lecture is a privilege.

“Great are the blessings we enjoy, Above what millions know; And when we hear thy holy word, A blessing, Lord, bestow.”

2d. Let us *add* up, or count the returns that have been made to God for all these mercies. Do you thank God sincerely for his goodness to you? Have you been obedient to your parents and attentive to their advice? Are you diligent in the duties of the school, and have you made that improvement there which you ought? 44 Do you know the principles of religion, or, I might say, do you know your catechism? Have you attended these lectures, or the house of God to hear his word on the Sabbath-day? Are you thankful for your food and raiment, and other comforts which you enjoy? I think you ought to be, when you know how many are destitute of them. Many persons in Switzerland, in the year 1803, had no other food than that which was made of bones, chaff, and the bark of a fir-tree. This they dipped in hot water and salt, and ate it instead of bread. And yet how many unthankful children there are in the world? Do you not often neglect to pray to God? Do you know Jesus Christ? Do you love him? Have you prayed to be taught, by the Spirit of God, how to improve your time and to number your days? Did you ever say, "O may thy Spirit teach, And make my heart receive Those truths which all thy servants preach, And all thy saints believe?"

45

3d. Endeavour to *subtract* the time that has been wasted and lost. So much time wasted in saying, "a little more sleep and a little more slumber;" so much time wasted in waiting for and eating your food; so much time in dressing and adorning the body; so much time in idleness and play; so much time in walking, riding, skating, sliding, on the Sabbath-day; so much time in loitering in the street as you go and as you come home from school; so much time in learning an idle song, in reading a novel or a romance; so much time spent at the theatre; so much time at the horse-race; so much time in idle company; so much time in doing nothing at all. A wise man once said, "We all complain of the shortness of time, and yet we have much more than we know what to do with. Our days are either spent in doing nothing at all, or in doing nothing to the purpose; or in doing that which we ought not to do." Take away the time that has been lost or wasted, and the time spent in 46 that which is really necessary, how little will remain for God and religion!

4th. Proceed to *multiply* the sins that you have committed during the past year, allowing three sins in each day, one idle word, one sinful action, one evil thought; multiply this by three, and it will amount to one thousand and ninety-five sins in one year. If we count from the time that you were five years old, and suppose you to be now ten years, by multiplying by five it will amount to five thousand four hundred and seventy-five. If you are fifteen years of age, we may double this number, and by so doing you will find that you have committed ten thousand nine hundred and fifty sins in the space of ten years. But this is only allowing you to have committed three sins in one day, while many of you have committed twice and perhaps three times as many. O what an amazing number of sins, and for every one of these you must give an account to God!

5th. Let us *divide* the present year in a suitable manner. There are twenty-four 47 hours in one day. Allow eight hours for sleep, eight hours for eating, drinking, dressing, reading the Scriptures, praying to God, and other necessary things, and eight hours for going to school, learning your lessons, and storing every knowledge that is good and useful. Let your sport be improvement, harmless, useful and healthy. Let no day pass without prayer and reading the Bible or Testament; and if you were to learn two or three verses every day, only think how many verses that would be in a year! Let no day pass without doing or obtaining something good. You ought to think that day lost in which you have not learned any thing. An emperor, remarkable for his benevolent actions, cried out one day, at supper-time, "I have lost a day," because in that day he had done not one good action.

6th. If you would number your days aright, you must pray for the Holy Spirit to assist you to put in *practice* those directions which have been given. Endeavour to form for yourselves a certain plan 48 for the regulation of your conduct and the improvement of your time. Abide by that plan, and never depart from it, unless from absolute necessity. One plan will suit you, and another will suit others. All cannot adopt the same, because of their circumstances. Never put off till to-morrow that which ought to be done to-day.

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A second branch of this education is the application of the heart to wisdom. Wisdom consists in using the best means to obtain any particular purpose or end. In every study or business in life, application is necessary. If you read, you must be attentive. If you hear, you must pay attention. If you write, you must take pains with your copy. If you cipher, you must think and apply your minds. If you are drawing, you must take particular care to imitate the painting before you. If you learn a trade, you must apply your mind; if you are in business, you must be diligent. Therefore, if application is necessary in the things of this life, 49 it is much more so when we are seeking the salvation of the soul; for that is the best wisdom. Be wise betimes, and remember that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord:

“The little ants for one poor grain Labour and tug and strive; But we who have a heaven to obtain, How negligent we live!”

God may say to some of you, “This year thou shalt die; with thee time shall be no longer.” Now, my young friends, look back upon the year that is past, think how that has been spent, and how much of it has been wasted and lost. Think how little time may now remain. Improve it to the utmost of your power. Think on the shortness of human life and the length of eternity. Compare one with the other.

“’Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours, And ask them what report they bore to Heaven, And how they might have borne more welcome news.”

“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near,” for it is 5 50 time to apply your heart to that which will engage your souls through an endless eternity. That you may know how many sins you commit in one year, allowing three to each day, it is here set down.

Days in a year 365

Library of Congress

Sins in a day 3

Sins in a year 1095

Sins in five years, multiply by 5

5475

For ten years 1095

10

Sins in ten years 10950

Offer up the words of the text every day in your prayers to God that he would teach you rightly to number your days.

“How long sometimes a day appears! And weeks, how long are they! Months move along, as if the years Would never pass away.

“It seems a long, long time ago, That I was taught to read; And since I was a babe, I know! 'Tis very long indeed.

51

“But months and years are passing by, And soon most all be gone; For day by day, as minutes fly, Eternity comes on.

“Days, months and years must have an end; Eternity has none; 'Twill always have as long to spend As when it first begun!

“Great God! an infant cannot tell How such a thing can be; I only pray that I may dwell That long, long time with thee.”

53

LECTURE III. *David's dying Advice to his Son.*

I Chron. xxviii. 9.—“ *And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imagination of the thoughts: if the seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.* ”

My dear young friends,

Let me entreat your serious attention. If you would know the difference between early piety and early wickedness, let me beg of you to be very attentive. Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Let it be your business on earth, to prepare for heaven.

True religion, or the fear of the Lord, is the greatest ornament you can wear in this world. It is the only jewel that you ^{5*} 54 can carry with you to heaven. It is highly important and will be highly beneficial for you all to be on the side of the Lord. The tender buds of childhood should be devoted to God, as well as the opening blossoms of youth; for out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God will perfect praise.

David had assembled all the princes and captains of Israel, and he was about to leave his people and his crown. In the presence of the people he gave this advice to his son: “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.” They are the words of a dying father, given in the most impressive and solemn manner. Where is the child who will not listen to them with attention and seriousness? I have adopted them ⁵⁵ as the most suitable advice that could be given you at this time. I shall therefore make a few plain remarks, and tell you a few plain things. I will not keep you long, therefore I hope you will not go to sleep.

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In the first place, I remark, what a good thing it is to have religious parents. It was of the greatest importance to Solomon that he had such a father as David, for he was called The man after God's own heart. The pious example he had seen, and the good instructions he had received from the lips of his father, led him to the knowledge of the true and living God.

Solomon received a crown and a kingdom from the hands of his earthly parent: but they are not worthy to be compared with the unfading crown and the everlasting kingdom which good children will receive from the hands of their heavenly Father at the last day.

Some of you are blessed with pious parents, who fear God. You enjoy advantages far above others. Listen to their 56 instructions, and follow their good example. Seek to know the true God and to be acquainted with the only Saviour, and then you will be secure and blessed indeed.

There was a little boy who had a very pious and good mother, but his father was a very wicked man. The good instructions and frequent prayers of his mother were so blessed to the soul of little John, that he was converted to God, while very young. Little John had a remarkable gift in prayer, so that his mother allowed him to pray in the family. His father overheard him while he was engaged in this duty. He was struck with remorse and shame. He heard a little boy, his own child, not more than twelve years old, lead that important exercise in his house, which he himself had neglected. This was followed by a deep conviction of his lost and miserable state, so that, under the blessing of God, it was the means of the salvation of his soul.

See here, my dear children, how important 57 it is to know God, and to seek him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. You may save the souls of your parents; you may do good to your companions and school-fellows, while other children are losing all their time in trifles and play.

Library of Congress

2d. I will tell you what you ought to know. What did David say to Solomon? "Know thou the God of thy father." Till you know God you know nothing. Till you know God you have no religion. This is true religion, to know God in his real character, and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. Till you know this you cannot be happy. Know thou the God of thy father. Know him as a spiritual God; for God is a Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Know him as the eternal God, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. Know him as the unchangeable God, for with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Know him as a powerful God, able to do all things. He is great in power and as 58 able to punish you for sin as he was to punish the children of Sodom and Gomorrah, upon whom he rained fire and brimstone. Know him as a God that beholds you at all times, that knows all you do and hears all you say.

"There's not a sin that we commit, Nor wicked word we say, But in God's awful book 'tis writ, Against the judgment day."

Know him as a wise God. He knows better what is good for you than you do yourself. Know him as a just and holy God, in whose sight the wicked shall not stand, who hateth every sinner, and who is angry with wicked children every day. Know him as a true and faithful God, faithful to his promises and true to his threatenings. God cannot lie. Know him as a good, gracious and merciful God. He supplies all your wants; he is gracious and merciful in sending his Son Jesus to die for you.

Christ, the Son of God, came down from heaven to save you from your sins 59 and from God's anger. His goodness is infinite. God is good to all. He delighteth in mercy; his mercy endureth forever. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Know him as a God of love and compassion. Know him as your Creator. It was God that formed your curious and wonderful bodies. David says, that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. It was God that made your hands to do his will, to be lifted up to him in prayer. It was God that made your feet to run in the way of his commands, that they might bring you to the house of God. It was God that made you a tongue to pray to him

Library of Congress

and to praise him. It was God that gave you an ear to hear his word, and eyes to see all the works that he has made. The sun and the moon were made by God. The sky and the stars are the works of his hands. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. It is God that hath made us, and not we ourselves.

60

"In heaven he shines with beams of love, With wrath in hell beneath; 'Tis on his earth you stand or move, And 'tis his air you breathe.

"His hand is your perpetual guard, He keeps you with his eye; Why should you then forget the Lord, Who is forever nigh?"

Know God as your Preserver. Know him as your Redeemer; Jesus, the Saviour of sinners; Jesus, the Friend of little children; Jesus, the Shepherd of Israel; Jesus, the Lamb of God; Jesus, the Mighty God; Jesus, the Prince of Peace; Jesus, the eternal Son of God, who came down from heaven to redeem your precious souls. God so loved the world, (that is, the people that were in it,) that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

But, my dear young friends, do you know God as the God of your fathers, or as the God of your parents? If so, then the parents and the children may both kneel at one throne of grace. Is there not pleasure in the thought that you know and love your father's God? The God who has preserved them and watched over them for good, will do the same for you.

Hear what your parents say: My child, know thou the God of thy father. He has been my God, and he will be yours. He has been my best Friend, and he will be yours also. He has been my Father, and he will be yours also. When we are taken away by death, then the Lord will take care of you. That God, who pardoneth the sins of parents, is able and willing to pardon the sins of the children.

Library of Congress

But there are some children who know not the God of their fathers, because they have no other God but the God of this world, the prince of the power of the air. There are some children who are entirely ignorant of their fathers' God. They have followed after strange gods. All the good instructions they have received and the good examples they have beheld, have been in vain to them. Happy the 6 62 parent and thrice happy the children who serve the same God. Let the children praise him; let them sing for joy; for Jehovah is the God of their fathers, and therefore they will exalt him.

Those children are the wisest that know most of God, but those children are the best and wisest of all that know him as the God of their fathers.

“My son, know thou the Lord, Thy father's God obey; Seek his protecting care by night, His guiding hand by day.”

3dly. But it is time to direct you how to serve the God of your fathers: and the text says, it is to be “with a perfect heart and willing mind.” Two things are necessary; first, sincerity of heart; secondly, willingness or cheerfulness of mind.

1st. Serve him with a sincere or perfect heart. Seek, my dear children, that the Spirit of God may assist you when you worship him. Remember, it is the heart that God beholds; it is the heart that he requires. Surely you would not wish to 63 be called hypocrites; therefore, let your hearts be engaged. Hypocrites endeavour to deceive themselves as well as others. They endeavour to mock God, by appearing to serve him in sincerity and truth. But they do not, and God knows it.

“Their lifted eyes salute the skies, Their bended knees the ground; But God abhors the sacrifice Where not the heart is found.”

When you serve God, if the heart is not engaged, then you only mock God. Let not your heart deceive you. You may deceive yourselves, but you cannot deceive God. To serve God with a perfect heart, is to serve him sincerely, and not to think on your sports, or

Library of Congress

play, or on trifles, but to think on God alone. Remember you are in his presence, and are speaking to a great and holy God. All the follies of childhood and the vanities of youth must be banished from your minds. This is the way to serve God with acceptance through Christ. Many profess to worship God, while their hearts are thinking on 64 other things. Remember, if you do this, you do not serve God with a perfect heart; for you do not serve him at all.

2dly. But you must serve God with a willing mind. God loveth the cheerful giver, and cheerful servants, however young they are. Many children, when they are in the house of God, would rather be at play. But I am glad that God hath brought so many of you here at this time. Whosoever is of a willing heart, says Moses, let him bring it, an offering unto the Lord. Many children would gladly retire to rest at night, and I fear many do, without praying to God. If so, this is not serving God with a perfect heart and willing mind. Satan has your heart still in his possession. You have not given it to God. But God, when he comes at the last day, will make a difference between those children who serve him with willingness and sincerity and those who are deceitful and unwilling.

In the third place, I will tell you the reason why you should serve God with a 65 perfect heart and willing mind; for “the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth the imaginations of the thoughts.” This is the reason which David gives to Solomon, and I cannot give a better one to you, my dear children. All things are known to God, past, present and to come. Your state and condition in life, your temper and disposition of mind, your whole conduct is all well known to God; you cannot hide any thing you think, say, or do, from God.

“Your thoughts, before they are your own, Are to your God distinctly known; He knows the words you mean to speak, Ere from your opening lips they break.

“Within his circling power you stand; On every side you find his hand: Awake, asleep, at home, abroad, You are surrounded still with God.”

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David knew this, therefore he reminded Solomon of it. Think thus, my dear children, when you serve God: "Now God sees me! he knows what I am doing, what I am thinking, and what I am 6* 66 going to say to him!" Thus you will be better prepared to serve him in the right manner, with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

4th. I will now tell you what advantages you will obtain by seeking God in early life. "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee." When you are in distress or exposed to danger, you will find a Friend that can support and deliver you. Seek the Lord as the friend of your souls, call upon him, and he will hear you in the day of trouble. Seek him, and he will teach you by his Holy Spirit. He will save you from every evil. How happy are those who have God on their side! They have nothing to fear, for if God be for you, who can be against you?

Seek the Lord in the morning of life, and it will be attended with numerous advantages to yourselves and to others. It is the best time to seek God; the sooner you seek him on earth, the greater will be your glory in heaven. It is a great pity to serve Satan in your best days, and 67 God with the worst; to spend the best of your time in seeking happiness where it is not to be found, while true happiness and the joys of heaven are neglected and despised. How bright is your morning sun; how full of vigour and bloom are your countenances; how warm your hearts; how active you are! These are your best days, your spirits are lively, your minds tender. Now is the time for learning and for acting; the beauties of holiness will shine with double lustre; others will imitate your example. Your morning sun may go down at noon. While it is yet day, the rose may fade on your cheeks, and the hour of death may come before you are prepared. How happy will it be to have God for your God, Christ for your Saviour, and heaven for your home.

"Why should you say 'tis yet too soon To seek for heaven or think of death? A flower may fade before 'tis noon, And you this day may lose your breath."

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It is not only the best time, but it is the 68 surest and safest time to seek the Lord now. Life is uncertain. You cannot call to-morrow your own. Like flowers, you flourish in the garden of life, in the morning; but before your sun arrives at its meridian, or before it sets in the evening of old age, death may come; the flowers may wither and die; sickness and pain may be your lot. Happy will you be if you seek the Lord, for then you will only be taken from his garden below, to be transplanted into his garden above, where you shall flourish in immortal youth. Now is the time to enjoy the pleasures of religion. The remembrance of the sins of youth is painful in the extreme. Many, when they grow up to years of maturity, have to lament that they have laid a foundation in youth for bitter repentance, and go down with sorrow and gray hairs to the grave. If you seek the Lord in the morning of life, it will increase your happiness in this world and in the world to come. Every right step you take leads you farther into the ways of pleasantness 69 and paths of peace. The path of religion is not only pleasantness now, but it leads to the paradise of God. It will produce happiness sweeter than life, and happiness which will outlive death itself. If you seek God now, it will prevent many evils and preserve you from many temptations.

“Tis easier work, if you begin To fear the Lord betimes, While sinners who grow old in sin Are hardened in their crimes.

“Twill save you from a thousand snares, To mind religion young; Grace will preserve your following years, And make your virtues strong.”

Now is the time to set a good example to your young companions. Joseph, David, Timothy, Abijah, Josiah, Samuel and Obadiah have all set a good example for you to follow. Now, therefore, let your parents have the unspeakable pleasure of beholding, in your tender years, the signs of real piety, of love to God. Let them see that you are resolved to set a good example to others. Now is just 70 the time to do good: seek God, and you will find him to be a father, a friend, a guide, and a protector. It will be far more pleasing to him, and it will be more for his glory, if you devote your youth to God and to Christ. Religion will abide with you while young, grow up with your riper years, and be your

Library of Congress

companion in the closing scenes of life. For godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. But it is time for me to conclude.

Therefore let me give you, in the last place, this warning. It may be the last you will hear: "But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." To be turned out of the family of God! To be given up, by him, to your father, the devil! To be shut out from heaven! To be cast off from God, whose favour is life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life itself! How awful! Your immortal souls will live forever; they can never die, but they will be cast down to hell. 71 If you forsake God, they will be condemned to spend an eternity in everlasting flames. Will you forsake the guide of your youth, and wander on in sin to everlasting misery? The thought is too painful. I cannot give you up. Rather let me weep over your careless and sinful conduct. O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night over your precious souls. Think of your misery. Who will be your friend, if God is not? Who will be your Saviour, if Christ is not? Who will change your heart, if the Spirit of God does not? Where will you go, if you do not go to heaven? I tremble for you. I pity you. Many of you, I fear, will be still careless, and run on in the downward road to everlasting misery, which I pray God to prevent for Christ's sake. Amen.

"Call while he may be found, And seek him while he's near; Serve him with all thy heart and mind, And worship him with fear.

72

"If thou wilt seek his face, His ear will hear thy cry; Then shalt thou find his mercy sure, His grace forever nigh.

"But if thou leave thy God, Nor choose the path to heaven, Then shalt thou perish in thy sins, And never be forgiven."

73

LECTURE IV. *Advantages of an early Love to Jesus.*

1 John ii. 28.—“ *And now, little children, abide in him, (Christ,) that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* ”

My dear young friends,

If you wish to be happy in this world and happy in that which is to come, you must fear God and love Christ while you are young.

“You can't too early serve the Lord, Nor love his name too dear, Nor prize too much his precious word, Nor learn too soon his fear.”

Permit me, my dear young friends, to ask you a few questions.

Thomas, what did you come for?

“To hear the sermon, sir.”

And what did you come for, William? 7

74

“Because my parents told me to come, sir.”

And what did you come for, John?

“Because I love to hear of Christ.”

And what did you come for, Benjamin?

“Because all the rest of the children came, and I did not like to stay behind by myself.”

Well, Ann, how happened you to come?

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"Because I wish to hear the word of God."

And, Rebecca, what was the reason you came? I heard that you were not so good as you should be.

"Why, I am sorry I have been so wicked, and hope I shall be a better girl for the time to come."

Well, Eliza, how was it that you came?

"Because I like to hear you talk of Jesus Christ."

Mary, I am glad to see you; tell me the reason of your coming here this evening.

"I came to follow the example of my namesake."

75

Who is your namesake?

"She is spoken of in the tenth chapter of Luke and thirty-ninth verse."

What is said of her in that verse?

"That 'she sat at the feet of Jesus and heard his words.'"

What did Christ say of her?

"He said, 'Mary has chosen that good part which shall never be taken away from her.'"

Well, my dear child, you are come to the house of God for a good purpose. I wish all the rest of the children would follow your example, and may the choice of Mary be their choice.

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"Father divine, diffuse thy light, And guide my doubtful footsteps right, Engage this frail, this wavering heart, To fix on Mary's better part."

Have any of you read Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress?

"Yes, sir, I have."

Can you tell me the names of those four little boys, who went on a pilgrimage with their mother?

76

"Yes, sir; James, Joseph, Samuel and Matthew."

Now, as they went on their way, they came to a certain great house; can you tell me the name of that house?

"The Interpreter's house."

No; it was after they had been there; and it stood on the top of a hill called Difficulty.

"O yes, the name of it was Beautiful."

Very right, that is the same I mean. Now, at this house they said their catechism to a young lady; what was her name?

"I think it was Prudence, sir."

Yes, it was, and she began with the youngest, whose name was James. Come, James, said she, can you tell me who made you?

"God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost."

Good boy, can you tell who saved you?

Library of Congress

"God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit."

Good boy still. How does God the Father save you?

Engr by M. Schmitz. T. Sinclair Lith. Philad a . PRUDENCE CATHECHISING the YOUNG PILGRIMS.

77

"By his grace."

How does God the Son save you?

"By his life and obedience to the law of God, and by his sufferings and death upon the cross."

How does God the Spirit save you?

"By convincing me of the evil of sin, by renewing my heart, and by guiding and preserving me in the ways of God."

She then called Joseph: and said, Let me catechise you, Joseph.

"With all my heart," said the child.

What is man?

"A reasonable creature, (created with a body and a soul.)"

What is meant by the word saved, or salvation?

"It means a deliverance from every evil, and possession of every good."

What is God's design in saving man?

Library of Congress

"To glorify his name, to display his grace and honour his perfections."

What are the perfections of God?

"His truth, justice, holiness, goodness, patience, power, mercy and love." 7*

78

Good boy, Joseph, says Prudence, thy mother has taught thee well.

Come, Samuel, are you willing to be catechised?

"Yes, if you please."

What is heaven?

"A blessed place, because God lives there."

What is hell?

"A place of misery, because it is the dwelling-place of sin, of Satan and his angels."

Why should you like to go to heaven?

"That I may see God, and serve him without weariness; that I may see Christ, and dwell with him in love forever; that I may have the fulness of the Holy Spirit in me, which I cannot here enjoy."

A very good boy, indeed.

She then called Matthew, the oldest, and said, Are you willing to be catechised?

"With a very good will."

Library of Congress

Was there any thing before God?

"No, for God is eternal, without beginning of days or end of years."

79

What do you think of the Bible?

"I think it is the word of God."

Is there any thing in it which you do not understand?

"Yes, a great many things."

What do you do with what you cannot understand in it?

"I think that God is wiser than I am, and I pray that he would be pleased to let me know every thing that is for my good."

Do you believe in the resurrection of the dead?

"I believe it, because I read in the Bible that the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and that we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

My dear children, you have heard how well these young pilgrims have said their catechism. Can you say yours as well? If not, I hope you will try to imitate them. But it is time for me to explain the words of my text.

80

I. Who were the words of the text spoken to?

"Little children."

And now, little children, the evangelist John was an old man, and often makes use of the word *children* to men and women. It is related of him, that when he was grown old and not able to stand to preach to them, and not being able to say much, he was carried in a chair to the church, and said to all, men, women and children, "Little children, love one another." Whether these words were spoken particularly to men and women, or to those who were but children, or babes in Christ, I cannot determine. I hope, however, I shall meet with indulgence from the liberal and candid mind, as to the manner in which I have accommodated them. Therefore, as the words *little children* are found in the text, they may mean persons young in knowledge and grace, or young in years. The last of these meanings I have chosen as most adapted to the subject and persons before me.

81

As these words are now addressed to you, my dear children, I hope you will attend to them. There are two different kinds of children here, as well as in the world; good and bad. God is the Father of the good, and he loves them. Satan is the father of the wicked children, and they do as he bids them. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. Ye are of your father the devil, and his lusts or sins ye will do." Those children who tell lies may be called Satan's children; for John saith, when he (that is, Satan) speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of lies. But we are not all children. Some are fourteen years old, and others are fifteen and sixteen, &c.

But surely you are not too proud to be called a child. What did Christ say to those who were twenty or thirty, perhaps forty, years old? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he 82 shall in no wise enter therein." You must be teachable and humble, like children. You must sit down at the feet of Jesus, and, like Mary, learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart, and "ye shall find rest to your souls."

Library of Congress

II. And now, little children, I will inform you who you are to abide in; that is, who you are to continue to love.

Can any of you tell me what Paul says?

“Yes, sir, he says, ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.’”

There are a great many children here. Your faces are all new to me, and there may be some here with new clothes. But I fear there are not many children who have new hearts.

“O, sir, you cannot tell how good we are.”

I know not your hearts, my dear children, and can only judge by your outward conduct; but God, who knows the heart, can tell better than I can. Are your actions better than they were? Have you 83 left off to do evil, and forsaken your old sinful ways? If not, then you are not walking in Christ Jesus; for he is the new and living way. How can your actions please God if your hearts are wicked? Depart from evil and do good. All things must become new. If you wish to live in Christ Jesus, or according to his word, your hearts must be new, and then your actions will be new, your companions will be new, your joys will be new, your pleasures will be new, you will have new thoughts, and they will produce new words; you will have new employments, you will make new resolutions. Before, you only *wished* to go to heaven; now, you have good reason to hope that you *shall go* there; therefore it is, that you have new expectations; and if you have all these new things, you will be new creatures indeed; you shall dwell at last with God and Christ forever, in the new Jerusalem, in heaven, where all things will be new to you all. Remember, your hearts must be entirely changed by divine grace: 84 God says, Give me thy heart, thine whole heart. God will not bestow half a new heart. He will not be satisfied with half your love. Christ is not a half Saviour. Hear what Jesus says to you, my dear children:

Library of Congress

“ Christ. Give me thy heart; I'll not delay To make it clean; then, child, obey.

Child. Here, Lord, then take a part, the best, And tarry till I mend the rest.

Christ. Give me thine heart; I'll have it all, A part's a gift by far too small.

Child. Forbear, O Lord, and longer stay, Excuse me till a future day.

Christ. Give me your hearts; now, children, say, What! will you all send Christ away?

Child. No, Lord, thy Spirit's power impart, Help us to give thee all our heart; Had we ten thousand hearts our own, We would unite them all in one; And in one offering freely send Them up to thee, our dearest Friend.”

III. I will tell you in what manner you are to abide in Christ. In the first place, you must be taught your need of Christ, and that if he does not save you from the wrath of God, there is no other that can, 85 either in heaven or on earth. You have heard that it is the Holy Spirit alone that can change the heart; and it is that Spirit for which you must pray to God. It is the Spirit alone that can teach you.

“What will the Spirit teach me, sir?”

He will not only teach you your need of a Saviour, but he will teach you that you are a sinner.

“I know that I am a sinner.”

So you do, perhaps; but it is one thing to say that you are a sinner, and another thing to know that you really are one. The Spirit will teach you the evil of sin. One leak will sink a ship, and one sin will sink your soul to the pit of destruction. The Spirit will teach you the necessity of a new heart, and the advantage of real and early piety; that you must love

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God and Christ, and that you must pray to God for the forgiveness of your sins for Christ's sake, and pray that the Holy Spirit may be your teacher.

"Imprint thine image on my breast, Thy Holy Spirit give, 8 86 A mind, with true repentance blest, That I may turn and live."

2. You must believe that Christ is able and willing to save you. To believe is to think that all the Scriptures say concerning him is really true. It is called faith, in the last line of the following verse:

"Believe in Christ, no more pursue The path that leads to death; This Jesus bled and died for you, Look, and be saved by faith.

"His sons and daughters you shall be, Through his atoning blood; For you may seek and find in him A Saviour and a God."

Do you think that Christ is able to save you?

"Yes, sir; the Bible says that 'we shall be saved from wrath through him.'"

Do you not think that he is as willing, as he is able, to save you?

"Yes, Christ himself hath said, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'"

87

3. You must obey all the commands of Christ. Can any of you tell me what Christ said to his disciples?

"Yes, sir; 'If you love me, keep my commandments.'"

Attend to me, and I will tell you what the commands of Christ are: Love one another. Search the Scriptures, or in other words, read your Bibles, and pray in secret to him who seeth in secret, that is, God. Do unto others as you wish them to do unto you. Do not

Library of Congress

swear, nor speak evil of any one. Love your brothers and sisters, and forgive them even till seventy times seven. Love your enemies, and pray for them that hate you. Love God, and believe in Christ. Obey your parents, honour your superiors, respect the aged. Call not your brother fool; for those who call ill names are in danger of hell-fire. Indulge not sinful thoughts. Lay up treasure in heaven, for where your treasure is there will your heart be also. Judge not hastily of any one's conduct, before you have examined the matter for yourselves. Do not find fault with others, when you do the same things yourselves.

Yes, my dear young friends, you are to keep these commands, and to do them, for in so doing, you shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

“Why should you shrink at his command Whose love forbids your fears, Or tremble at that gracious hand Which wipes away your tears?”

IV. What you will gain by living a life of love to Christ, and obedience to his commands. But let me first see what you would like to have, because all children do not love the same thing.

What do you want, little boy?

“I should like to be wise, sir.”

Well, really I did not expect to find a little Solomon here.

Did you ever read Solomon's prayer?

“No, sir; what did he pray for?”

He said to the Lord, Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go in and come out before this people. He was king over Israel.

“Did the Lord give him what he asked for?”

Library of Congress

Yes, and more besides. He gave him riches and honour, as well as wisdom and knowledge.

“Where can I find Solomon's prayer?”

In the second book of Chronicles i. 7. They only are wise who are wise unto salvation.

“One thing I ask; Lord, wilt thou hear, And grant a youth a gift so dear? Wisdom descending from above, The choicest token of thy love.

“Wisdom betimes to know the Lord, To fear his name, to keep his word; To lead my feet in paths of truth, And guide and guard my wandering youth.”

Do you want any thing else, my dear boy?

“Yes, sir; I want to be happy.”

Well, my dear child, remember that the way to be happy is to be good; and the way to be good is to be wise; and the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord; and the fear of the Lord is the way to heaven. Good children are happy in life and in death; and happy forever, after death, in heaven. Wicked children are never happy, neither in this world nor in that which is to come.

A poor little boy who was bound apprentice to a chimney sweeper, as he could not go to school on week-days, attended a Sunday-school for instruction, and there is every reason to believe that what was taught at that school made a great impression on his mind. A little while afterwards he was sent to sweep a chimney, and while in it, he was heard to sing,

“The sorrows of the mind Be banished from this place; Religion never was designed To make our pleasures less.”

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Think of this, my dear children. The poor little chimney sweeper could bid sorrow depart, and though he was surrounded with darkness and soot, yet he was happy, and could sing of the pleasures of religion. What a proof this is 91 of what Solomon says! Can any little boy tell me what it is?

“Yes, sir; ‘Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.’”

“O did the young around but know How great their pleasures are, They would each golden joy forego, Such matchless bliss to share.”

Well, now I will ask that dear little girl who has been so attentive to what I have said; what do you wish for, little girl?

“I should like to go to heaven when I die, sir.”

So you shall, if you live a life of early love and obedience to Christ.

“But cannot I do any thing to obtain the favour of God?”

No.

“Why?”

Because all your duties are mixed with sin.

“If I be very good indeed, will not God love me for that?”

Not unless you love Christ and trust 92 him to save your soul. You cannot do any thing without God. All your good thoughts come from God first, so that if you are very good, it was God that first made you so; because you were born a sinner.

“But cannot I go to heaven without Christ?”

Library of Congress

No, that I am sure you cannot.

“But could not I buy heaven if I had plenty of money?”

No, not if you were as rich as a Jew.

A certain nobleman in Ireland took a particular pleasure in showing a good minister his house, his garden and lands; and among other things he showed him a fine church which he had built.

“Now, sir,” said the nobleman, “don't you think that will merit heaven?”

The minister paused a moment and said, “Pray, sir, how much may your whole estate be worth a year?”

“I think,” said the nobleman, “about fourteen or fifteen thousand pounds, or about sixty thousand dollars.”

93

“And do you think, sir, God would sell heaven for fourteen or fifteen thousand pounds, or sixty thousand dollars?”

But there is one great advantage spoken of in the text, which I must now consider; that is, when he shall appear, you shall have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. When Christ shall come to judge the world at the last day, then those good children who have trusted in Christ and his righteousness, and lived a life of love and obedience to God, shall not be in the least afraid.

Now let us suppose that the day is already come. The trumpet sounds. The dead arise. The rocks and mountains are all fled away. The world is on fire, and the heavens in

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flames. Christ the judge appears, with his holy angels, in flaming fire; and the dead, small and great, are brought before his bar, to receive their last sentence.

“That awful day will surely come, The appointed hour makes haste, When we must stand before the Judge, And pass the solemn test.”

94

Perhaps there may be two of your school-fellows standing dose by you; and for the sake of distinction, I shall call them James and Charles:

“Well, Charles,” says James, “what do you think of Christ now?”

“Think of him?” says Charles; “I cannot bear to think of him. Once he would have been my Saviour, but I did not love him or obey any of his commands, and now I behold him as my Judge. O James, let me get behind you, till I can hide myself among the crowd yonder.”

“Ah, Charles, the Judge will see you wherever you are.”

“James, James, what shall I do? Where shall I go? Where can I hide?”

“Charles, it is in vain for you to think of hiding yourself. You cannot escape.”

“But, James, why are you not afraid?”

“Because I love Christ. I trusted in him when I was on earth. He is my Saviour. I shall now be with him in eternal glory. Why do you tremble so, Charles?”

“Because I am afraid of the face of 95 Him that sits upon that throne. I am ashamed to see my Judge, and endless misery will be my portion.”

“How will you hear that dreadful day, And stand the fiery test! Give all your sinful joys away, And be forever blest.”

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There are two little girls talking with each other; let us hear what they say.

“Maria, Maria, why do you hang down your head? what are you ashamed of?”

“O Sarah, I shall soon be called before the Judge, to give an account of my bad conduct while I was on earth; I have been very careless and wicked.”

“Ah, Maria, I often told you what would be the consequence of your breaking the Sabbath and disobeying your parents. You would not hearken to me, but was angry with me, because I told you of your faults and gave you good advice. You only laughed at what I said about religion.”

“O Sarah, I wish I had taken your advice and followed your good example. I 96 wish I had read my Bible and prayed to God, and then I should now have been as happy as you. But now what shall I do?”

“Maria, it is now too late to seek a Saviour, to ask for pardon, or to hope to find a friend in that Judge whom you have despised.”

“O Sarah, I am without a Friend! without a Saviour! without a heaven! and without a crown! I wish I could go with you to the right hand of the Judge.”

“I wish you could, Maria, but that is now impossible! We shall soon be separated forever.”

“Think! Sarah, only think! There my misery will never have an end! Good bye, Sarah, farewell! I shall never see you any more.”

O my dear, dear children, how many of you, at the last day, will be the companions of Charles and Maria, and be found among those who are at the left hand of the Judge? Many of you, my dear children, I fear, will be as much ashamed and afraid as Charles and 97 Maria. Some will be ashamed because they have told so many stories. Some will be ashamed because they have behaved so unkindly to their parents and brothers

Library of Congress

and sisters. Others will be ashamed of their disobedience to their parents and teachers. Some will tremble and hang down their heads with shame, because they have been guilty of cursing and swearing, and have often taken the name of God in vain. Others will be ashamed to see Christ because they did not love him, but despised him who offered to save their souls. Ah, my dear children, there are many more wicked things which you have done that you will be ashamed of at that day, when Christ shall come to judge the world in righteousness.

“And must the crimes which we have done Be read and published there? Be all exposed before the sun, While men and angels hear?”

But the text begins with these two words, “And now.” The meaning of these words is, that you must begin to love 9 98 Christ and obey his commands now; that you ought to “remember your Creator in the days of your youth.” Let it be said, that from the day you heard or read this lecture, you began to seek the Lord; to pray for pardon, and to ask for grace.

“Well, I think I shall begin to-morrow.”

To-morrow, did you say? To-morrow is not yours; be wise, consider your latter end. You may die to-night: To-day if you will hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts, lest he swear in his wrath that you shall never enter into his rest.

“Then why should you so long delay What others learned so soon? O do not pass another day, Without this work begun.”

You cannot tell what a day or an hour may bring forth. There may be but a step between you and death.

“’Tis dangerous to provoke a God Whose power and vengeance none can tell; One stroke of his almighty rod Can send the sinner quick to hell.”

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“And now, little children, abide in him, 99 that when he shall appear you may have confidence and not be ashamed at his coming.”

“Young as I am, with pilgrim feet, Father, I travel to thy seat; And, leaning on my Saviour's hand, Prepare to leave this barren land.

“My cradle was beset with fears, My infant eyes o'erflowed with tears; Ere I could good or evil know, My little heart was filled with wo.

“Diseases threatened to destroy All the young buds of rising joy: And thus in early life began The cares and sorrows of the man.

“Oft sickness shades a mother's eyes, And many a friend around me dies; And oft I feel oppressed with care, A stranger, as my fathers were.

“While o'er this desert world I roam, Teach me to seek a better home, Unstained by wo, unchanged by years, Unlike this gloomy vale of tears.”

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101

LECTURE V. *The Character of the Child's best Friend.*

Prov. xviii. 24.—“ *There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*”

My very dear young friends,

Never have I proposed a more interesting subject to your attention. I think I hear some one say, Who can be a better friend to us than our father and mother? Yes, my young friends, your brother may be, if you have one, and he should live after you are deprived of

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your parents. An elder brother might perform a double duty, that of a parent and that of a brother: but such kind and affectionate brothers are rarely to be found.

The text speaks of a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. It may not be amiss to introduce this subject with the outlines of a story which you have perhaps 9* 102 read many times. Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, had passed sentence of death upon Pythias, and the day of his execution was fixed. The poor man begged but one favour from the tyrant, which was, that he might be permitted to visit his family, who were at that time a considerable distance from him, promising faithfully to return on a day appointed. This Dionysius refused, unless some person could be found who would consent to suffer death in his stead, if he failed to fulfil his promise. It so happened, that Damon, the friend of Pythias, heard of the tyrant's proposal; and, unknown to Pythias, offered himself to Dionysius and was accepted. Pythias was therefore liberated, and Damon imprisoned.

Various circumstances occurred to prevent the return of Pythias at the appointed time. The very morning of the execution dawned upon Syracuse, before his arrival. Dionysius had the curiosity to visit Damon in the prison, as the day of the intended. execution drew near, that he might learn 103 what his views now were, of what he deemed the folly of his conduct.

He found the generous man full of joy at the prospect of death, that he might thereby save a life more valuable than his own; hoping, at the same time, that unfavourable winds would prevent his friend's return.

When the hour arrived, Damon was led forth to the place of execution, Dionysius the emperor being present. In a short speech, Damon told the surrounding multitude. that his dear friend Pythias would soon arrive, but he hoped not before his death had saved a life so valuable as that of Pythias was to his family, his friends and his country. He then begged them to consider, that from contrary winds which had blown from one point of the compass many days past, it was impossible for him to have returned. "But since

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yesterday,” said he, “the wind is changed, and Pythias will soon be here.—Make haste,” said he to the executioner, “and do your office.”

104

At that moment a voice was heard from among the crowd.

“Stop, stop the execution!” The multitude joined the cry, until it was echoed from all quarters. It was Pythias. He was mounted on a horse covered with foam from the rapidity with which he had rode. In a moment he leaped from his horse, and was on the scaffold. He could say no more but, “You are safe, you are safe, my friend, and I am happy.” Damon, on the other hand, exclaimed, “O fatal haste! that hath brought you here too soon.”

Dionysius saw what passed, and, for the first time, felt the force of generous friendship. He descended from his throne, mounted the platform, and from a conviction not to be resisted, cried out, “Live, ye generous friends, both of you, and form my mind, by such an illustrious example of friendship, to imitate virtue so truly noble.” his was a friend in need, as well as a friend indeed. “Greater love 105 hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.”

“On thee our lives and souls depend, Our Heavenly Father, Guide and Friend; And we are happy, if we share Thy smiles, thy counsels and thy care.”

The text speaks of a greater friend than Damon was to Pythias. “There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” I proceed,

I. To inquire, who this Friend is? To which I shall give six answers.

1. I will tell you his name: it is Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God. The prophet Isaiah calls him the Mighty God—the Everlasting Father—the Prince of Peace. This name was given him by God his Father. Jesus signifies a Saviour. For the angel of the Lord appeared

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to Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, and told him, that Mary, his espoused wife, who was then a virgin, should bring forth a son; that she should call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Joseph was a carpenter by trade, 106 and Mary his wife was an humble virgin; yet they both descended from David, the king of Israel. This, my young friends, is the name of your Friend.

“Jesus, to multitudes unknown, O name divinely sweet! Jesus, in thee, and thee alone, Health, honour, pleasure meet.”

2. I will tell you the place where he was born: he was born at Bethlehem of Judea, the city of David. Bethlehem signifies the house of bread: he could not be born in a more proper place, because he is not only the Friend of sinners, but the bread which came down from heaven. Jesus is called the Bread of Life. The prophet Micah foretold, more than seven hundred years before it came to pass, that Bethlehem would be the birth-place of the true Messiah. This is the place where your Friend was born.

“Ye humble shepherds, go, To David's city fly; The promised infant born to-day Doth in a manger lie.”

107

3. I will tell you about the time when he was born. The exact time when Christ was born is not certainly known. The evangelist Matthew tells us, that it was in the days of Herod the king; and Luke says, it was in the reign of Cæsar Augustus. Herod was an Edomite, and was made King of Judea by Cæsar Augustus, who was then ruler of the Roman empire, which, on account of its great extent, was called the whole world. It included Parthia one way, and Britain another. It was never so extensive before or since. The prophet Daniel, who lived six hundred years before Christ was born, said that this was to be the time. Now the fulness of time was come, and that was God's time, and the most proper time for the birth of Jesus. It was at a time of universal peace.

"We see the prophecies fulfilled In Jesus, that most wondrous child; His birth, his life, his death combine To prove his character divine."

4. I will tell you what he did on earth. 108 Till he was about thirty years of age, he lived with his parents at Nazareth in Galilee. Then he entered on his public life, and went about doing good. He called his disciples, who were only twelve in number, and ordained them to preach his gospel, and they were continually with him, and may be called his family. They were his scholars, and he taught them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. He turned water into wine. He hushed the tempest to a calm. The winds and waves obeyed him. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, made the lame to walk, opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf, caused the dumb to speak, and raised the dead to life again. He received all that came to him for relief or instruction, both rich and poor, old and young. He frequently spent the night in prayer to God, and the day in doing good to men. But he had many enemies, and they sought to take away his life. This is the manner in which your Friend spent his time on earth.

109

"Behold, the blind their sight receive, Behold, the dead awake and live; The dumb speak wonders, and the lame Leap like the hart, and bless his name."

5. I will tell you how he died. Jesus was betrayed by one of his own disciples into the hands of his enemies, who bound him and led him away. They falsely accused him, smote him, spit upon him, buffeted him, mocked him, scourged him, and then led him away to be crucified between two thieves, on Calvary. They nailed his hands and his feet to the cross, and gave him vinegar mingled with gall for his drink. To complete the whole, one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side, and there came out blood and water. He was crucified between ten and twelve o'clock in the morning, and died between three and four in the afternoon. At his death, there was darkness over the whole land for three hours. The rocks rent, the graves opened, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. Thus Jesus

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died a painful and shameful 10 110 death; and have you no tears to shed for him who is your best Friend?

“But drops of grief can ne'er repay The debt of love you owe; To Jesus give your hearts and lives, 'Tis all that you can do.”

Lastly. Though your Friend was dead and buried, yet after three days he arose from the grave. After he had been forty days on earth, he ascended to heaven in a cloud, in the presence of his disciples, from a mountain in Galilee. Your Friend, my dear children, is now in heaven. But he will come again, and then every eye shall see him. At the last day, he will come in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire, to judge the world; to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not his gospel. Yes, my dear young friends, we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Then will wicked children see him who would now save their souls, and hear him condemn them to eternal misery. Then will good children behold 111 him as their Saviour, and their best, their everlasting Friend.

II. Having told you who this Friend is, I must describe the particular marks of his character.

1. He is an affectionate and compassionate Friend. His love for you, my dear young friends, is very great, so great that he left his Father's bosom, and came down from heaven to earth, to save you from your sins and from God's anger. His love was so great, that he who was the Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, condescended to become a poor, feeble, helpless infant; to be born of a poor virgin, to be wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger, that he might teach you the way to heaven. He came to be despised and rejected for you; to endure hunger and thirst for you; to suffer and die for you. When he was in heaven, surrounded with angels and all the glories of the upper world, he saw you were miserable, 112 and pitied you; he saw you were poor, and came to enrich your souls with his grace. For he who was rich, for your sakes became poor, that you, through his poverty, might be rich. He saw you were sinful, and he came to make you holy. He saw you were naked, and he

Library of Congress

came to clothe you with his righteousness. He saw you were wandering, and he came to guide you to his Father's fold. He saw you were the children of Satan, and he came to make you the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. He bore the wrath of God, the rage of men, the malice of devils. He bore every kind of reproach and contempt, suffered the greatest hardships, and endured the most painful sufferings, that you might be saved from endless misery, and enjoy eternal happiness.

"It cost him death to save your lives, To buy your souls it cost his own; And all the unknown joys he gives Were bought with agonies unknown."

2. He is a constant and powerful Friend; he not only loves you now and then, but he loves you at all times. He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. He is able to save your souls, and not only able, but willing to save the most sinful children in the world. He can pardon all your sins, though they are more in number than the hairs of your head, or the stars of the heavens.

"Can Jesus save me? I have disobeyed my parents; broken the Sabbath; told the greatest falsehoods, and called my brothers and sisters by the worst of names. I have been idle, as well as wicked, and as to praying to God, or reading my Bible, or loving Christ, I have not done one of them. Can Jesus love or pardon such a sinful child as I am?"

Yes, his merits are so great, that he can save you, because his blood cleanseth from all sin. Delay no longer. Jesus is waiting to save you. God is waiting to be gracious to you. Christ invites you to come to him, and he will be your constant and powerful Friend. 10*

114

"Dear Jesus, can a child so vile Be numbered with thy own? No grace but thine can reconcile, No blood but thine atone."

3. He is one that sticketh closer than a brother.

“That cannot be,” you say, “for no one can love me better than my brother. He always endeavours to please me. He weeps when I am hurt. He cannot bear to see my parents punish me, and he would rather be beaten himself than that I should be beaten. Wherever I go, he will go with me. Once I was at play by the side of a river, at the bottom of the garden. By accident I fell in, and he, in endeavouring to save me, had nearly lost his own life.”

Your brother cannot give you a new heart: Jesus can. Your brother cannot preserve you from wicked thoughts: Jesus can. Your brother did not die that you might be saved from hell: Jesus did. Should your brother die first, he cannot secure you a place in heaven: but Jesus, 115 your elder brother, can. “I go,” said he, “to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also.” Your brother cannot intercede with God for you in heaven: but Jesus is gone to appear in the presence of your heavenly Father, and there he continually makes intercession for all those who love him and put their trust in him. Wherever you are, there will Jesus be. Wherever you go, Jesus will go with you. Besides, your brother cannot be always with you. When he grows older, then you must part. But Jesus sticketh closer than a brother, and will be with you at all times and in all places. Jesus will be with you in sickness and health, in poverty and riches; in childhood and youth; in the years of maturity; in old age; at the hour of death and through eternity. When all friends forsake you, Jesus will be with you. When your father and mother are dead, then the Lord Jesus will take you up. When your dear brother and sister are taken from you by the hand of death, then Jesus, 116 your elder Brother; Jesus, your affectionate Friend; Jesus, your compassionate Redeemer; Jesus, your constant intercessor; Jesus, your powerful Saviour, lives. He lives in heaven, lives at the right hand of his Father, and he lives forever and ever. O delightful thought! He lives to show his love by pleading with your God.

4. He is indeed your best Friend. No person can claim this title but Jesus. Not the best of men on earth, nor the highest angel in heaven. Consider what Jesus has done. He died to save your souls. None of you, my young friends, can redeem your brother or your sister

Library of Congress

from death, or give to God a ransom for their souls. He died that you might receive pardon of your sins. Many, if not all of you, I fear, are yet enemies to God and Christ. But even while you were enemies to him, Jesus died that you might be reconciled to God, through his blood. He died to purify your hearts from sin; he wore a crown of thorns, 117 that you might wear a crown of glory. Even now he is pleading before God his Father in heaven. It is Jesus that presents your prayers to God, purified from every thing that would hinder their acceptance with him. It is he that gives you the Holy Spirit, to teach you how to pray and what to pray for. The friendship of Jesus began long before you were born, and it will continue till time shall be no more.

“With tender pity in his heart, He acts the Mediator's part; A Friend and Brother he appears. And well sustains the names he bears.”

III. Be attentive, my dear young friends, while I relate his acts of friendship to children when he was on earth.

1. He healed the nobleman's son, who was sick of a fever.

A certain nobleman, who lived at Capernaum, had a little boy who was very ill of a fever. As soon as this nobleman heard that Christ was come to Cana of Galilee, he set off from Capernaum, which 118 was fifteen miles from Cana, to ask Jesus to come and heal the child, telling him that he was at the point of death. “Go thy way,” said Jesus to him, “thy son liveth.” He believed Christ, and went home.

On the way, he was met by the servants, who told him that his child was well and in health. “Yesterday at the seventh hour,” said they, “the fever left him all at once;” and this was the same hour in which Jesus said, Thy son liveth. And himself believed and his whole house; that is, they all became the disciples of Christ. The child's sickness was made the means of saving the souls of his parents, and all the servants. Christ can cure the fever

Library of Congress

of the mind as well as that of the body. This is the second miracle which Jesus wrought in Galilee.* Jesus was this little boy's best Friend.

* John iv. 46, &c.

2. He raised the ruler's daughter from the dead. He was a ruler of the synagogue. His name was Jairus, or Jair. 119 He came to Christ, and fell at his feet, and with humility and earnestness entreated him to cure his sick child, a little daughter, about twelve years old, the joy of his heart, the darling of his family. She appears to have been very much beloved, too, by the neighbours and friends; for at her death they wept and wailed greatly. The ruler entreats Christ to come and lay his hand on her, believing, that if he did this, she would return even from the borders of the grave, for she was at the point of death.

As Jesus went with the ruler, a woman came behind him and touched the hem of his garment, and was healed of her disease.

But now the painful tidings came to the ruler, that his daughter was really dead. Christ encourages the heart of the sorrowful father, for he said, "Be not afraid, but only believe."

And when he came into the chamber where the little girl was, he took her by the hand, and said unto her, "Damsel, I 120 say unto thee arise:" and she arose and walked; and he commanded that something should be given her to eat.* Jesus can raise those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

* Mark v. 22, &c.

3. He cast out an evil spirit, and cured a poor little boy who had the falling sickness and was subject to fits. As Christ came down from the mount of transfiguration, there came a man from among the multitude who kneeled before him, and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is mine only child, and he is a lunatic and sore vexed; for oft times he falleth into the water, and oft times into the fire." A lunatic is one whose distemper commonly lies

Library of Congress

in the brain. The child may have had the falling sickness, and by it Satan tormented him and made it more painful. In his fits the child was dumb, and the fit was so violent that he foamed at the mouth and gnashed with his teeth, like one in great pain and misery, for the 121 spirit tore him and almost pulled him to pieces. This was a constant grief to the afflicted father. He carried him to Christ's disciples, but they could not cast him out. And Jesus said, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him." This evil spirit was so malicious, when he heard this, that he would have killed the child if possible: but Jesus effectually cured the poor child, and thus became his best Friend.*

* Mark ix. 14.

4. He taught humility to his disciples by the example of a child. They inquired, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And Jesus called a little child, and set him in the midst of them. He tells them, that as children, they must be harmless, inoffensive, void of malice; they must be subjects of his kingdom, and not rulers; that they must obey, and not command; that they must be humble, and not exalt themselves above measure. The disciple is not above 11 122 his Lord, nor the servant above his master.

5. Notice his kind attention to the hosannas of the children in the temple, and the rebuke he gave the scribes and Pharisees. Some children do not sing at all in the temple. The word hosanna means, "save now," or "save us, we beseech thee." The children were astonished and delighted. They rejoiced to see Christ. They united in singing his praise. They wished him happiness, prosperity and success. They prayed that he would save them from sin, misery and the wrath of God; that they might be with him in heaven, and sing his praise there. This song became them. They were Jewish children. Some might be playing near the temple, and so left off to sing the praises of Christ. And some of them might have been brought by their parents to worship God. Christ was far from being ashamed of them. He took particular notice of them. God may be honoured by babes and sucklings as much 123 as by those who are grown up unto years of maturity. His praise

Library of Congress

was perfected or finished, completed, by the children. It had a peculiar tendency to glorify God. Think of his tender regard and attention to them when brought to him by their parents and friends. It is said, that he took them up in his arms, and put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

O what a sight! O what highly favoured children they were! I think I hear you say, O! if Jesus was here now, I would go to him that he might bless me, and pardon my sins. O, says another, I should like to be taken up in his arms, and to sit on his knees. O, says a third, I would ask him to make me one of his lambs. O, says a fourth, I would ask him to be my friend, and if he would, then I should not want any other Friend but Jesus.

Ah, my dear young friends, is Jesus your Friend, or is he not? Have you sought his friendship? Do you love him, or do you not? O seek that he may be your best, your kindest, your everlasting Friend. Amen.

124

“Young children once to Jesus came, His blessing to entreat; And I may humbly do the same, Before his mercy-seat.

“For when their feeble hands were spread, And bent each infant knee, ‘Forbid them not,’ the Saviour said; And so he says for me.

“Though now he is not here below, But on his heavenly hill, To him may little children go, And seek a blessing still.

“Well pleased these little ones to see, The dear Redeemer smiled: O, then, he will not frown on me, A poor, unworthy child.

“If babes, so many years ago, His tender pity drew, He will not surely let me go, Without a blessing too.

"Then while this favour to implore My little hands are spread, Do thou thy sacred blessing pour, Dear Jesus, on my head."

125

LECTURE VI. *Christ in the Temple.*

Luke ii. 46.—" *And it came to pass, that after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them question.* "

My dear young friends,

There are many young people, who, though they are in general dutiful and obedient to their parents, yet are apt sometimes to forget themselves, and commit faults worthy of blame. Kitty Atkins was a child of this disposition. She had frequently been told by her mother always to hasten home from school, and in general she did so. But it happened one afternoon, that a schoolfellow (a little girl about her own age) invited her to go and drink tea with her, and promised her a variety of amusements in the evening. 11*

126

Kitty was so delighted with the prospect of her pleasures, that she quite forgot what her mother had often told her; and went, without even telling her where she was going. Her mother, finding that she did not return for more than three hours, concluded that she was lost, and actually employed the bell-man to go about the streets, and offer a reward to any person that would bring her home.

Just as the bell-man had finished his round, Kitty came home. On being asked where she had been, she told the whole truth, (for she never told a falsehood, even to screen herself from punishment.) She then begged her mother's pardon, and promised never to do so again. Her mother told her how wrong it was to do so, and that she should speak to the mother of the little girl who had enticed her, and also to the teacher of the school.

Library of Congress

And it was determined, to prevent the ill effects of such an example, that on the very next half holiday, all the girls should be assembled in the play-ground; 127 that Kitty and her companion should be placed in the middle, and their schoolmates around them in a ring, and that a man with a bell should go three times round the yard proclaiming "A lost child!" in the same manner as the bell-man did when Kitty was lost. Vain were the entreaties of the two girls to be excused from the shame of this punishment; they were obliged to submit to it, and it had so good an effect upon them, that they have behaved well ever since.

I. We find that Jesus was lost; at least his parents did not know where to find him. Jesus was then twelve years old; so that you here find that what is said in one of your little hymns is really true.

"At twelve years old he talked with men; The Jews all wondering stand: Yet he obeyed his mother then, And came at her command."

Here I wish you to remember three things:—1. That children are sometimes *accidentally* lost. This is often the case with children in the country, as well as 128 children in the city. They frequently wander from home without the knowledge of their parents; and a little child may soon get so far from home as not to know its way back again. Parents should teach children to tell their names, and the name of the place or street where they live, as soon as they are able to speak. Little children should not go beyond the bounds of their habitation, unless there is some person with them, or they are quite sure of finding their way back.

2. That all children are *naturally* lost. They are lost in sin. They wander in the paths of iniquity, till Christ, the good Shepherd, finds them, and brings them back to the fold of God. Children know not the right way to heaven, and many have none to teach them the way to eternal happiness. By nature you are all sinners The Bible says that we are all born in sin, and shapen or made in iniquity. These are the words of David, the man after God's own heart. While you continue in sin, like the prodigal son, you are 129 lost to your heavenly

Library of Congress

Father. Though he knows you, and all that you say, think, or do, yet you do not know who and what he is, or what he has done for you. You are lost to every thing that is good; but you know how to do evil things fast enough. You have read many books, and know what they contain; but you seldom read your Bibles. Do you know who Jesus Christ is, any of you?

"Yes, sir: he is God's own Son, who came down from heaven, to save us from our sins and from God's anger." Hark! what is that I hear?

"The praises of my tongue I offer to the Lord; That I was taught and learned so young To read his holy word.

"That I am brought to know The danger I was in, By nature and by practice too, A wretched slave to sin.

"That I am led to see I can do nothing well; And whither shall a sinner flee, To save himself from hell?

130

"Dear Lord, this book of thine Informs me where to go For grace to pardon all my sins, And make me holy too."

3. Remember, that many children who die while they are so wicked and without a new heart, are *eternally* lost.

Can you think, my dear children, that those who curse and swear and tell stories, can go to heaven when they die? No, God is angry with wicked children every day.

Can you think that those who disobey their parents and break the Sabbath can live with God and his holy angels? No, they cannot. No, you never will dwell with God, unless you

Library of Congress

love him; and if you love God, you will not do any thing that will make him angry. But why should you be afraid of God's anger?

“Because he can kill my body, and make my soul miserable after my body is dead.”

You know what your little hymn says, “There is beyond the sky A heaven of joy and love,
131 And holy children, when they die, Go to that world above.

“There is a dreadful hell, And everlasting pains; There sinners must forever dwell, In darkness, fire and chains.”

II. We find that search was made for Jesus, “and they sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance.” Under this remark, I will mention three things more, which I wish you to remember.

1. That children, when accidentally lost, are sought for with the greatest anxiety and sorrow by their parents. Could you see them, I think you would not go from home, without their knowledge, any more. Could you hear them saying, “Have you seen my little girl, and where?”—“Do you know where my little boy is gone?” Every possible inquiry is made, every place where you are accustomed to play or to visit is searched; but no such little boy or girl is to be found.

Many accidents may happen to you while absent from home. You may fall 132 or otherwise hurt yourselves, and be obliged to be carried home to your tender parents. If you play near the water, you may fall in and be drowned, and be brought home to your parents dead. You may be run over by a horse or wagon; and many other things might happen to you. Therefore, you should never go from home, without first telling your parents where you are going; and, if they refuse to let you go, you may be sure that the place is improper, or else they would not make any objection.

2. That as all children are naturally born in sin, they are sought for by the Lord Jesus Christ and his ministers, with the tenderest regard for the salvation of their souls. That is the reason of my talking to you now, that you may know Jesus Christ, and who he is, and what he has done for you. I hope I shall be able to persuade some little boy or girl who is here to love him, and to ask him for a new heart and the pardon of his or her sins.

133

“Seek Jesus, he alone can give That grace by which a child must live; All other hope is false and vain, None enter heaven till born again.”

Jesus Christ came to seek and to save those that are lost. And as I said before that all children are lost in sin, therefore Christ came to seek and to save little girls and boys, as well as men and women. Little children are all sinners, and Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; even the very chief, the greatest sinner, Christ is able to save. The most sinful child Christ is able to pardon and make one of his lambs.

Come to Christ, my dear children, and he will give you a new heart, the pardon of all your sins, and save you from the wrath to come.

“Come, children, 'tis Jesus that calls, The voice of your Saviour obey; When Jesus invites you to come, No disciple shall turn you away.

“The children he folds in his arms Must surely be blessed indeed; 12 134 For Jesus alone can bestow The heavenly blessings they need.”

3. That children are sought for with the greatest malice and hatred by Satan, that he may tempt them to commit sin, which makes God angry. Sin is the cause of your souls being lost forever. The Bible says, that “the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” It is Satan that makes children disobedient to their parents. It is he that persuades them to tell stories, and teaches them to curse and swear; and when they hear

Library of Congress

other children say wicked words, Satan tempts them and tells them to say the same. He makes them idle and lazy.

“Some children, by old Satan taught, Can dare to use the liar's tongue; Such children must to Satan go, Such, to eternal flames belong.”

It is Satan that entices children to break the Sabbath. It is he that lulls them to sleep when they go to church, that they may not hear the sermon, because he 135 hates every thing that is good. It is he that teaches children to cheat and deceive persons. He fills their hearts with pride, anger, malice, hatred, and makes them quarrel and fight, and do mischief.

“The devil tempts one mother's son To rage against another; Thus wicked Cain was hurried on, Till he had killed his brother.”

Satan makes children hate God and their Bible. He endeavours to keep them from praying to God, because he hates prayer.

III. That Jesus was found in the temple. Here are three things more which I hope you will remember.

1. Children are sometimes found at very improper places. In the word of God, among other marks of the prosperity of Jerusalem, Zechariah mentions that the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof; but, my dear children, the street is very often an improper place to play in. If the streets are not very wide, you cannot play with safety. Children should not be 136 found in roads where many carriages are continually passing by. I had rather see children at play in a yard, or garden, or field, where they are not in any kind of danger. Children should not be found in a stable where there are horses. Children should not be found near the water. Children should not be found among a crowd of people, because they are likely to be pushed down and trampled on. Children should not be found in Beelzebub's temple,—the devil's school: it is a school of

Library of Congress

scandal and of vice; the certain road to ruin and everlasting misery. There you will learn all kinds of wickedness, every thing that can corrupt the mind, or ruin the soul—I mean the play-house, or any such place of public amusement.

2. Sometimes children are found at places where they are not expected to be found. I have read of three little boys, who used to meet to pray in a saw-pit. Who would think of finding children in a saw-pit at prayer to God, for the pardon of their sins, through the blood of Christ?

137

3. What a delightful thing it is, when children are found in the place where Jesus was; in the temple, the house of God. The church is the temple of God. There you hear the word of God. There you hear how much Christ loves little children. There you hear the commands of God, and you are bound to obey them. There you hear how happy good children will be, and how miserable wicked children will be. There you are told of the joys of heaven and the miseries of hell. There you hear the ministers of God praying for you, that you may be good and obedient children,—the lambs of Christ; that you may go to heaven when you die.

“For you the public prayer is made, O, join the public prayer; For you the secret tear is shed, O, shed yourselves a tear.

“We pray that you may early prove The Spirit's power to teach; You cannot be too young to love That Jesus whom we preach.” 12*

138

IV. We find that Jesus was found in the midst of company. He was sitting in the midst of the doctors. Here are three more things for you to remember.

1. Children should not be found in idle company. Idleness is a root from whence many other sins spring, that are very offensive to God. You cannot learn to pray from those who

Library of Congress

never pray themselves. Children learn the ways and words of those children with whom they play.

“From one rude boy that's used to mock, They learn the wicked jest; One sickly sheep infects the flock, And poisons all the rest.”

Good children will not be idle, they will always find something to do. If they are in want of employment, they will study their Bibles, where they will find both instruction and entertainment. Idleness brings want: it is very sinful to waste your time in idleness. Samuel was not idle. When he was a very little boy he waited upon the Lord. Timothy was not idle. No, he knew the Scriptures from a child. So he read his Bible, and remembered what he read. Bees are not idle, ants are not idle, birds are not idle. It is a shame for children to be idle.

“In books, or work, or healthful play, Let your first years be past, That you may give for every day Some good account at last.”

2. Children should behave in a suitable manner when they are in company. There are some children who take the advantage when they are in company, because they know that their parents cannot then correct them for their faults.

My dear children, you do not know how much you injure yourselves and your characters, as well as hurt the feelings of your parents, by this conduct. The persons who are present take notice of your behaviour; and when they go home, they say to their children or others, “I was quite sorry to see how such a little boy or such a little girl behaved. If it had been a child of mine, I should have been ashamed, and have punished it severely for such bad conduct. I hope, my dear child, you will never behave so; if you did, I should be very angry with you.”

Those children may go and tell their school-fellows and playmates of your bad behaviour, and they will shun you. They will avoid your company. They will reprove and tell you of

Library of Congress

your faults, and reproach you. Then learn, my dear children, how necessary it is for you to behave well when you are in company. A good name is better than great riches.

3. Children should be found in the company of the wise and good. Christ was found among the doctors. If you are in the company of those who are truly wise, you will gain much knowledge.

“Away from fools I turn mine eyes, Nor with the scoffers go; I would be walking with the wise, That wiser I may grow.”

You will find a greater delight in the company of wise and good children than in the company of those who are mischievous 141 and wicked. Children should take delight in going to school, for there, if they are diligent scholars, they will learn much and grow wiser every day. I wish it may be said of you, my dear children, as it was of Christ, that he grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Good children are never alone. God is always with them. They are not afraid in the dark; for God their Father is with them there.

A little boy who was at sea in a great storm was playing about the cabin, while all the passengers and sailors were much terrified and alarmed. When the storm was over, he was asked why he was not afraid. “O,” said the child, “why should I be afraid when my father is at the helm?” Remember to keep company with wise and good children.

V. We find that Jesus was well employed in this company, both hearing them and asking them questions. Here, my dear children, you may learn much 142 from the example of Jesus Christ when he was a little boy. What was he doing among the doctors in the temple?

1. He was hearing them; that is, listening attentively to what they said. From this part of the employment of Christ, first learn to be attentive. How is it possible for you to know what

Library of Congress

anybody is saying to you, if you are looking about you, and playing and laughing, when you should be looking at the minister? You should be attentive to your parents when they speak to you; to the minister when he speaks to you from the pulpit; to your teacher when he instructs you in the school.

2. Learn to be humble. Never think that you know enough. Always be learning. You cannot know too much. Remember what you are made of, that you are dust, and must return to dust again. What have you to be proud of? Nothing. Be always ready to learn, and remember that there are others who have been many more years in the world than 143 you. Why, you are but beggars, after all your pride and vanity.

“And what are children, at the best, But beggars charitably drest; Poor little beggars, who receive Nothing but what their parents give?”

3. Learn to be teachable. Good children are humble, modest, teachable and attentive, and so must all those children be who wish to go to heaven. In that happy place, the angels are all lovely and amiable, and so must all good children be, if they wish to dwell with Jesus in his heavenly kingdom. Holy delightful it was to the Lord Jesus to see Mary sitting at his feet, listening attentively to the words which he spoke; and she did not hear in vain. How pleasing it is, my dear children, to see you all so still and attentive. I wish you may all say, by your looks and actions, “Give us, dear Jesus, ears to hear, And hearts to understand; In trouble may we find thee near, A Saviour close at hand.”

144

VI. We read that Jesus was hearing or attending to what they said. The text tells us that he was employed also in asking them questions. From this part of his employment you may learn, my dear children,

1. To seek instruction. There are many children who are very curious, and discover very early an inquiring mind. Some children will puzzle their parents to give them answers to some of their inquiries. A little girl once asked me this question. “If I should go to hell when

Library of Congress

I die, and pray to God when I am there, will he not take me to heaven afterwards?" "No, my dear child," I replied; "don't you know what is said in one of your hymns?"

"Then 'twill forever be in vain To cry for pardon or for grace; To wish I had my time again, Or hope to see my Maker's face.

It will then be too late to pray; therefore you had better pray to God now."

2. Children should manifest an earnest desire to be instructed, by asking questions 145 when they are reading about what they do not understand. A little boy, who used to read the Bible to me on the Sabbath-day, whenever he came to a word or sentence which he did not understand, used to stop and ask the meaning.

3. Children should endeavour to remember what they hear, that they may profit by it. This may be the last time; you may not hear of Jesus Christ any more; you cannot tell how soon you may die.

I will now conclude, my dear children, with a few admonitions. Have a little patience, and listen to me a little longer. I will not keep you many minutes.

1. Remember that you are lost in sin; that you are all sinners, and stand in need of a Saviour to pardon your sins.

2. Remember to search or seek for salvation; that is, to seek to have Christ for your Saviour; to be delivered from the bondage of sin and the dominion of Satan; to be delivered from all evil, and to possess that which alone can make you 13 146 happy in this world and in that which is to come. None but Christ can save your souls from hell.

3. Pray that you may be found in the temple of heaven at last. There you shall see Jesus face to face, and dwell with holy men and holy angels. Then shall you sit at his right hand, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures forevermore.

Library of Congress

4. Children should be very careful to avoid bad company, and keep company with wise and good children, or none at all. Bad company has been the ruin of thousands. It is the first step to ruin.

5. Learn of those who can and will instruct you. If they think it a pleasure to instruct you, you should think it a privilege and pleasure to attend to their instructions.

6. Go often to the house of God. Jesus always went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, wherever he was. Children should be always ready to go to the house of God. A very little girl, who 147 had been at play with her school-fellows on a Saturday afternoon, said that she wished every day was Saturday, except one.

“And what do you wish that to be?” said her mother.

“Sunday,” said the child.

“Why?”

“Because then I can go to the house of God, and hear about Jesus Christ.”

7. Remember to behave in a proper manner in the house of God. Do not laugh and play, or be inattentive; but listen to what the minister is saying, that you may hear the word of God. Take heed also of going to sleep when you are there.

8. Read your Bibles. Study the life of Christ, and imitate his example. And may the Lord give you understanding in all these things, and bless you all, for Christ's sake. Amen.

“Bright were the beams of love divine, When God's own Son, an infant, came, And all his actions, as he grew, Our growing admiration claim.

148

"Twelve years (his age) divinely led, He came to do his Father's will; Though God himself, forever blest, He would his Father's law fulfil.

"There, clad like us, Jehovah sat Among the tribes of Israel's race; Each elder wondered where he learned Such words of wisdom and of grace.

"For more than man, though yet a child, His deity divinely shone; He filled his Father's temple well, And well he fills his Father's throne.

"Then, holy Saviour, may we seek, As we in years and stature grow, To follow thee, the living way, And do thy Father's will below.

"To Sion, as thy parents led Thine infant footsteps in the way, So may our parents lead us on, While we with willing feet obey."

149

LECTURE VII. *The good Child's Petition.*

Luke xi. 1.—" *Lord, teach us to pray.* "

My dear young friends,

It is a painful thought, that there are thousands in hell, who, while here on earth, never uttered one prayer to God, from the hour of their birth to the time of their death. Many have died with an oath or a curse upon their lips. Many have died, and many children too, praying to God; and, full of holy joy, have sung his praise, while passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death. What are the prayers which you offer to God? Some there are, now within these walls, who never pray at all. Some who only say a short prayer which they were taught when quite young. Some there are who say, perhaps, "I believe in God," but this 13* 150 is not a prayer. It is only telling God what you believe; while, at the same time, you know nothing at all about the matter. There are some children who say

Library of Congress

the Lord's prayer, "Our Father," &c., and this, indeed, is an excellent prayer. It was taught by Jesus to his disciples, when they came to him and said, Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples; and he said unto them, When ye pray, say

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

How many of you, my dear children, understand the meaning of this prayer? Not one half of you. You say, "Our Father who art in heaven," when at the same time you curse and swear and lie and break the Sabbath. You disobey your parents, You never read the Bible, 151 unless you are obliged to read it, and yet you say, "Our Father," while at the same time you have a wicked heart, keep wicked company, indulge wicked thoughts and do wicked actions.

Remember, that God is the Father of good children only; but wicked children are a part of the devil's family. Satan is their father, and he was a liar from the beginning of the world; so that we are not to wonder when his children tell so many lies as they do. Are you not often cross, ill-natured, cruel and mischievous? You call God your Father, and at the same time you obey the devil.

You say, "Hallowed, or sacred, be thy name;" and upon the most trifling occasion you will say, "O Lord! O God! O Christ! God bless us! Lord, look!" This is taking the Lord's name in vain.

You say, "Thy kingdom come;" and at the same time, you are the servants of the wicked one and slaves of sin. You belong to Satan and to the kingdom of darkness and iniquity.

Library of Congress

You say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" and, at the same time, you oppose the will of God and do all you can to hinder it from being done, either by yourselves or others. It is his will that you should come here from time to time to hear of God; but you do not come. It is his will that you should pray; but you do not pray. It is his will that you should read the Bible; but you do not. It is his will that you should be good children; but you are not. Why do you say one thing and mean another?

You say, "Give us this day our daily bread." If you were to be asked who it is that gives you food, you would say, your parents: but who gives it to your parents? God.

You say, "Forgive us our trespasses, or sins, as we forgive those who trespass against, or injure us." Now when any one has done any thing amiss to you, do you forgive them? Do you not take revenge by treating them ill, or speaking ill of them? If you expect God to forgive your sins, you must forgive others, your brothers, your sisters, your school-fellows and playmates.

You say, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." My dear children, you should not only pray to God to keep you from sin, but you should try and keep yourselves from it, by watching against the very appearance of evil; by forsaking your evil ways and wicked companions, for they will lead you not only into evil and sorrow, but to misery without end.

"Thine is the kingdom;" and may all these children be subjects of the kingdom of God. "Thine is the power." O Lord, exert thy power at this time, let thy work appear to thy servant and thy glory unto these children. "Amen." If but one soul be taught to seek the Lord, if but one child be brought to pray to God, (for he will hear the prayers of a little child,) to Him shall be all the glory and all the praise.

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Thus the prayer is concluded. Now, my young friends, attend to the lecture, and I hope you will go away wiser than you came, and know more of the nature, importance and necessity of prayer.

The first question a child would naturally ask me is this, *To whom should I pray?* You say it is my duty: tell me the name, nature and attributes of that Being to whom my petitions are to be offered.

His name is God. In his nature he is spiritual and eternal, and those who worship or pray to him must worship him in spirit and in truth. He made you, therefore it is your duty to pray to him: he expects that you should love and serve him, and how can you pretend to love and serve him, if you never pray to him? Could you but see God only once, you would think him the most lovely and most excellent of all beings.

Are you not very young? A few years ago you had no being at all. Twenty years ago you were not born. You cannot preserve your own lives. He that made you can destroy you. Besides, you are sinful creatures. You have provoked that God who made you, to be angry with you, and to take away all your comforts. Are you willing to continue under the anger of Christ forever?

God is very gracious. He has not only encouraged you to pray to him, but promised to hear your prayers. Do you know how terrible the anger of God is? He can make you miserable in this world and in that which is to come.

“To Christ, who reigns above the sky, Your Father and your Friend, To him let all your vows be paid, And all your prayers ascend.

“With all the love a Father feels, He pities and forgives; And though our earthly parents die, Our heavenly Father lives.”

The second question a child would ask is, *What should I say when I pray to God?* Before I answer this, let me ask you a question, and I should like to hear one of you answer it.

What is prayer?

156

“Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ.”

Yes, prayer is the desire of the heart. If you are hungry, you will ask for food: if you are thirsty, you will ask for drink: if you are lost, you will ask for the right way. You will not ask for what you do not want. Do you know what your wants are? Attend.

1. The wants of your bodies. I mean, the things you want in this world. They are called temporal wants. You stand in daily need of food and raiment, that you may not suffer hunger or cold. You want the continuance of your health and strength, or you would pine away in sickness and pain. Can you preserve your own lives, or can any of your friends save you from dying? Do you not know that Christ is the author of all your comforts? It is on him that you depend for daily food and clothing, for health and strength, for recovery from sickness, for preservation from danger and death. It is certainly 157 from God that you must seek all these things by prayer. You never heard a beggar complain for want of words to express his wants, or that he did not know how to beg, or what to say. Are you not exposed to dangers every day and every night? Do you not want the care of God to keep you, to preserve you from mischief, from fires, from violent and cruel men, and from all evils of every kind? You cannot walk without his help. You cannot learn without his assistance; therefore you should pray for a retentive memory.

2. Spiritual wants. You are guilty creatures, and need the pardon of your sins. You have hearts, but they are not holy; therefore they must be renewed. And, since you cannot atone for your sins, or change your hearts, how earnestly should you pray that God would forgive your sins and change your hearts, for the sake of his well beloved Son, Jesus

Library of Congress

Christ. Remember how sinful you all are by nature. Are you not ready to commit new sins every day? Are you not apt to be angry 14 158 without a cause; to strike others too soon, and call them names, for which, afterwards, you are very sorry? Do you not fret and grow uneasy if other children have things better than you? Are you not apt to disobey your parents, or your teacher, when their commands are not pleasing to you? Are you not sometimes inclined to hide your faults by telling a lie? Do you not find yourselves too ready to learn that which is evil; and to be indifferent or careless about that which is good? Are you not ready sometimes to do a thing privately which is not allowed you, or which is forbidden? O, my dear young friends, do you not find that there are a great number of things that you want? And when you pray, you need not be at a loss for words, or for a blessing to ask of God. See how much you need the grace of God to keep you from sin daily.

“What is there, Lord, a child can do That feels with sin oppressed? There's evil which I never knew Before, within my breast.

159

“My thoughts are vain, my heart is hard, My temper apt to rise: And when I seem upon my guard, It takes me by surprise.”

3. There are eternal blessings of which you stand in need, and for these you ought to pray to God. You cannot always live in this world. Your body must die, and be buried, and turn to dust in the grave. But your soul or spirit cannot die; it must then go into another world. You have been told, that Jesus, who was once on earth and died for sinners, is now gone to heaven to prepare a place for all that serve God and love him. Do you think he will prepare a place for you? Can you bear to go like a stranger into another world, and not know where you are going? You must stand before the Judge of all—are you prepared? There is a heaven for the righteous, who love Christ and pray to him; and a hell for the wicked, who neither pray to him nor love him. Can you even hope that God will save you

Library of Congress

from hell, and receive you 160 to dwell with him and the holy angels, if you never pray to him for blessings? Now I have told you what you should say to God when you pray to him.

A third question that a child should ask is, *Who should I pray for besides myself?*

Your parents claim part of your prayers to God. Have you not a father and a mother that you are bound to love and obey? Would you not pray that God would give them grace, and enable them to instruct you, and bring you up in his nurture and admonition? Have you brothers and sisters? Pray for them. Have you friends and relations? Pray for them. Your teachers, too, pray for them. You should pray for ministers also; they catechise and instruct you; and when you hear them preach, you should pray for a blessing on what you hear. They pray for you, and you should pray for them. Pray for your school-fellows, and for those poor children who never pray, and who have no parents to pray for them. O, my young friends, say with all your 161 hearts, "Lord, teach us how to pray, and what to pray for. We cannot remember all these things without thy help."

My dear young friends, after offering up this short petition, a child would ask a fourth question, *Who will teach me to pray?* Hear the text. I will read it. "Lord, teach us to pray." By these words you find it is the Lord that will teach you. Yes, my dear young friends, by his Holy Spirit he will bring all these things to your remembrance. The Holy Spirit will sanctify your hearts and make them holy. By the Spirit you are taught the evil nature and awful consequences of sin against God. By the Holy Spirit you are taught the necessity and importance of prayer. It is the Spirit that creates in your hearts a desire to pray. It is the Spirit that will teach you what you are to pray for. It is the Spirit that will keep your thoughts from wandering when you pray to God. It is he that keeps you from weariness, dulness and carelessness in prayer. True prayer from 14* 162 the heart comes from God to the heart, and then arises from the heart to God again. See, then, my dear young friends, how necessary it is to have such a teacher as the Holy Spirit.

Library of Congress

Again, a fifth question that a child would ask is, *How, or in what manner, am I to pray to God?* Remember, when you are going to pray, to whom you are going to speak. It is God, and not man. It is a holy, just, merciful and majestic God; who regards the hearts and thoughts more than the words or the posture.

“When daily you kneel down to pray, As you are taught to do, God does not care for what you say, Unless you Feel it too.”

Remember, then, that you are praying to God, and not to man; therefore, speak as if you were speaking to God alone. A low voice in prayer is proper. It may be so loud that yourself can just hear it, and you will find it of some use to keep your thoughts from wandering. Let your 163 thoughts be composed. The reading of a chapter or a psalm will help to compose your thoughts and fix them on divine things. Take care that you do not mock God with your lips, while your hearts are far from him.

“What foolish thoughts your hearts beguile; And when you pray or sing, You're often thinking all the while About some other thing.

“Some idle play or foolish toy Can send your thoughts abroad, Though this should be your greatest joy, To love and serve the Lord.”

Be sincere in what you say to Christ. Pray as if you earnestly wished that God would hear you, not as though you did not care whether he heard you or not. Be humble, when you remember that you are dust. It is a great condescension in God, who is infinitely great as well as infinitely good, to listen to the prayers of sinful children, such as you are. It shows that he is very gracious and kind, to attend to the wants of little children; that 164 he will not only hear, but that he will answer their prayers, and give them every blessing which they need.

Library of Congress

"God is so good that he will hear Whenever children humbly pray; He always lends a gracious ear To what the youngest child can say."

Pray with submission to the will of Christ. Imitate Jesus, and after you have prayed for every blessing you want, say, "Not my will, but thine be done;" not as I please, O Lord, but give me what thou knowest to be good and proper for me. Remember to ask for every blessing and every favour in the name of Jesus Christ, for the sake of what he has done for children.

"Dear children, never, never dare To act the trifler's part; Nor think that God will hear a prayer That comes not from the heart."

A sixth question that a child would ask is, *How often should I pray?* At least every morning and evening. There are some children who only pray to God, or 165 rather say their prayers, in the evening. Some say the Lord's prayer and a hymn. Some say, only a hymn, or part of a hymn, and then they think they have done all that is required of them. Their parents are satisfied. The children are satisfied. But God is not satisfied.

"You never can be said to pray, From what your lips are saying; 'Tis when your lips and heart unite, That God beholds you praying."

Can you lie down to rest at night, before you have thanked God for his care of you during the day? You should likewise endeavour to remember what sins you have committed during the day, and beg of God to pardon them, for Christ's sake. You ought to implore his protection through the night, that you may lay yourselves down in peace and sleep. For remember that it is God alone who makes you to dwell in safety.

When you rise in the morning, can you sit down to your breakfast, or go abroad to school or anywhere else, before you 166 return your thanks to God for his kindness to you

Library of Congress

through the night, and entreat his blessing upon yourselves and friends, and on what you are about to do in the day?

But you may pray oftener than night and morning. Daniel prayed three times a day. David prayed three times a day, morning, noon and night. I knew a young girl, about twelve years of age, who used to go up-stairs to pray to Christ by herself, as soon as she came home from school in the morning. I am afraid there are not many who do so.

One more question may be asked, and I must answer that before I tell you of any more little girls and boys. *Where may I pray?* Isaac prayed in the field. Daniel, in the lion's den. Jonah, in the fish's belly. Samuel, in the temple. Christ, on a mountain. Peter, on the house-top. Children commonly pray in their chambers. I knew a little boy, who used to pray sometimes as he was walking in a lane or in the street, sometimes in the 167 garden or in the hay-loft. Remember, that it is not the place, nor the time, which God regards; BUT THE HEART. He will hear you whenever you pray and wherever you pray. He is more ready to hear than you are to pray, and more ready to forgive than you are to ask forgiveness. He hears you if you but utter a sigh, or a groan. He counts all the steps you take to a throne of grace. There is not a more lovely sight than a little child on its knees in prayer to God.

I am now going to repeat some of the most remarkable prayers. Susan's prayer—then they all kneeled down, and were all very attentive to hear the little girl pray for her father in this way: “O God, my heavenly Father, I love thee, because thou art always good; and I hope my other father will be good too; and then my heavenly Father will love him and make him happy. O make him good, and we shall all be happy.” The effect of this prayer on her father was very great.

Joseph's prayer. A little boy used the 168 following words: “Now, O Lord, save me, a sinful child and a vile sinner. I know I have sinned against thee many times. O Lord, I wish I had not. Do hear, O Lord; save me, a poor sinful child. Christ was crucified; dear Lord, save me for his sake. O this soul of mine, that must be in heaven or hell forever! Keep me this

Library of Congress

day and month and year; and if I should live twenty, or forty years, help me to live to thy glory.”

Elizabeth's prayer. A little girl of this name said to her teacher, a little before she died, “Farewell, my friend, my ever dear teacher; the last prayer I make to God shall be for you; and whenever your Saviour calls you home, I will (if he permits me) with pleasure come out of the golden gates to meet you, when your soul leaves the body, and join the angels in conducting you to our Immanuel.”

John's prayer. A little boy, who had been bitten by a mad dog, was informed that the doctor was sent for; but he, closing his eyes and folding his hands, 169 said, “O my God, thou canst do more for me than the doctors can. Thou hast washed me in the blood of the Lamb. Take me to thyself. I shall not stay long now. I must die and go to the bosom of my Jesus.”

“To heaven can reach the softest words, A child's repenting prayer; For tears are seen, and sighs are heard, And thoughts regarded there.”

But what shall I say to those who never pray; who rise in the morning and lie down in the evening, and never utter one single prayer to God at all? My dear children, where do you sit? What are your names? What, not pray to God!

“I do not know how to pray.”

Have you parents?

“Yes.”

Well, do they not teach you to pray?

“No.”

Do they ever pray?

"I never heard them."

Ah, my dear children, I pity you. O, ye praying children, hear this! Here are 15 170 children who never prayed to God in their lives! O, pray for them, that the Lord would teach them to pray. Their minds are ignorant of Christ and religion and heavenly things. Is it not a pleasing thing to think that God has promised to give his own Holy Spirit to instruct and teach you how to pray? Do you not read in the Bible, If fathers give good gifts to their children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? You, my dear children, who never yet prayed to God, have only to use the words of the text as a prayer; and to offer the prayer of the publican, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." You have need to say, with Mary Turner, "Lord, Give me a new heart."

What whisper is that I hear? "Lord, teach us to pray."

"Lord, teach a little child to pray, Thy grace betimes impart; And grant thy Holy Spirit may Renew my infant heart.

171

"A sinful creature I was born, And from the birth I strayed; I must be wretched and forlorn Without thy mercy's aid.

"But Christ can all my sins forgive, And wash away their stain; And fit my soul with him to live, And in his kingdom reign.

"To him let little children come, For he hath said they may; His bosom then shall be their home, Their tears he'll wipe away.

"For all who early seek his face Shall surely taste his love; Jesus shall guide them, by his grace, To dwell with him above."

LECTURE VIII. *The Way to be Wise.*

John v. 39.—“ *Search the Scriptures.* ”

My dear young friends,

The Bible is the best book in the world. It is the only book that can make you truly wise and truly good. It may well be compared to a river, whose waters, in some places, are so shallow that a lamb may walk through them, and in other places so deep that an elephant may swim in them. It is not to be compared with any other book, not only because it speaks the truth alone, but because it changes the heart and raises the thoughts from earth to heaven. It has no trifling stories, as many other books have. Even those parts which relate the histories of good and bad men are full of excellent lessons of instruction. Here 15* 174 are lessons for the young, as well as for their parents: lessons which teach us God's love to early piety. This we see in the calling of Samuel while yet a child; and God's hatred to young sinners in his sending judgments upon the sons of Eli.

A martyr who was condemned to die for his love to God and his regard for the Bible, when he came to the stake, took his final leave of all things here below in these affecting words: “Farewell, sun and moon; farewell, all the beauties of creation and all the comforts of life; farewell, my dear friends; farewell, my beloved relations; and farewell, thou precious book of God.”

David, the king of Israel, made this public declaration: that the word of God was more to him than thousands of gold and silver; sweeter to him than honey or the honey-comb. How precious the Bible must be. It is the book from God! Yes, it is certain that God has given you the Bible. And what the Bible says you 175 are to regard as the word of God; as his voice speaking to you. You are told and taught to believe this: because, in 2 Tim. iii. 16, it

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is thus written, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Wicked men say and pretend to believe the Bible is not true, only because they wish it were not true. And when it reproves them for sin, they curse the book, and would, if they dare, throw it in the fire.

A party of young men, who were exceedingly wicked, met together one evening, and in the midst of their wickedness, madness and folly, they came to an awful resolution to burn the Bible! Accordingly a large fire was prepared. The Bible was laid upon the table, and near it stood a flowing bowl of liquor, to drink after the dreadful deed was performed. One of the most wicked and daring in the company was appointed to carry the Bible from the table to the fire. He took up the sacred volume, and was walking towards the fire. He cast his eyes on the book in his hand. A sudden trembling seized him in every part of his body. Paleness covered his face. He came back to the table, and laid down the Bible, saying, "Let us not burn that book till we get a better." This young man afterwards lived to experience its value and taste its sweetness even on a dying bed.

"O bless the Lord for Bibles given, To teach our souls the way to heaven."

I. Let us inquire what you are to search? It is the Scriptures, or sacred writings, which we are told were written "by holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The word *search* means to read with close and earnest attention. You are directed to search by him who knew the value of the book which he commands you to read. The Old Testament was all that was then written, but the New Testament is now added, by which their value is much increased, 177 their harmony displayed, their meaning explained and their beauty set forth. The Bible is the name by which this precious book is mostly called. Some say the Holy Bible. Others call it the Word of God, because the things which the Bible contains were spoken by God, and written "by holy men, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is also called the Old and New Testaments. The Old

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Testament was written by Moses and the prophets; the New Testament, by the evangelists and apostles. The Old Testament contains thirty-nine different books; and the New (which has been written since the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world) contains twenty-seven books.

This precious book contains a variety of important truths, which may be divided into history, doctrine and prophecy, each of which are equally instructive and important. There are excellent examples for you to imitate; important doctrines for you to believe, and precepts for you to 178 obey; mysteries, far above the understanding of the wisest of men; while many parts are so plain and simple, that a little child may learn the way to heaven.

“How glad the heathen would have been, That worship idols, wood and stone, If they the book of God had seen, Or Jesus or his gospel known.”

A vessel sprang a leak at sea, and was sinking very fast; when the sailors jumped into the boat, one of them, at the hazard of his life, ran back into the cabin for something he had forgotten, and when he came back to the boat, behold it was a Bible! which he esteemed so much as to run the risk of his life to save it.

II. I will endeavour to show you why you should search the Scriptures, or, I might say, and perhaps you will understand me better if I say, why you should read your Bibles. After having told you what you are to search, or read, the next thing is, to give you some reasons to urge you to search the Scriptures: and I 179 assure you I can give you some very good ones.

One reason is, because it is not only the best book, but it is God's book. If you were at a distance from home, and your parents sent you a letter, would you not read it? O yes, that you would, I am sure. And will you not read what God has written for you? A little girl once said, that the Bible was God's word, and that the catechism was the Bible's word.

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Another reason is, because you do not know what the Bible contains. And if you are ignorant of the important and glorious things which are in the Bible, you are strangers to the only things which can make you happy in this life and happy forever in the world to come. Let me briefly tell you what things these are, which you ought to know.

The Scriptures will tell you who and what God is: that he is a Spirit; that he is eternal, holy, wise, powerful and good. They will tell you what you are: that you are all sinners, born in sin and shapen 180 in iniquity; that your thoughts and imaginations are evil from your youth; that you go astray from your birth, speaking lies; that childhood and youth are vanity; that your hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; that your natures are depraved, your understandings darkened, your passions sinful, your affections earthly, and your souls exposed to the wrath of God; that your bodies were formed of dust, and will return to dust again; but that your souls are immortal, and will live forever.

The Scriptures tell you what is your duty to God and man: "That thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments," said Christ, "hang all the law and the prophets."

The Scriptures tell you of a Saviour, who was God; but who came down from heaven, and became man, that he might save your souls from the wrath to come. 181 They tell you that he suffered hunger and thirst, temptations and trials; that he became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; that he was sold by Judas, denied by Peter, and forsaken by the rest of the disciples; that he was falsely accused, unjustly condemned, buffeted, scourged and spit upon; that he was crucified on the cross, and gave himself a ransom for you. He suffered, that you might be happy. He died, that you might live forever.

The Scriptures tell you the way to heaven; that Christ is the only way to God the Father; that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. They tell you that he has gone to heaven, to prepare a place for all those dear children who serve God

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and love his Son Jesus. They tell you it is on account of what Christ has done that you will be admitted into heaven, and not on account of any thing that you can do.

The Scriptures relate to you the history of the creation of the world; the fall of Adam; the flood; the building of Babel; 16 182 the plagues of Egypt; the giving of the ten commandments; the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness, and the miracles attending it. There are histories of good and of bad children, as well as of wicked and of holy men; but, above all, there is the history of Jesus Christ, his birth, his life, his miracles, his suffering and death.

The Scriptures give you the real characters of Cain and Abel, of Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, Joseph, Jabez, Samuel, Abijah, Josiah, Obadiah, Solomon, Timothy, Mary, Martha, Dorcas, Lydia, Phebe, Priscilla, Rebecca, Sarah, Abigail, Hannah, Esther and Ruth. My dear little girls will read and learn the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs, from the tenth verse to the end, if they would know the character of a good woman.

The Scriptures speak of God's punishing wicked children. God set a mark upon Cain; denounced a curse upon Ham; commanded the stubborn son to be put to death; caused the children who mocked 183 the prophet Elisha to be torn in pieces by the bears; and Absalom to be cut off for his undutiful conduct to his father.

The Scriptures give you an account of some remarkable prayers; such as the prayer of Jabez, the prayer of Solomon, the prayer of Agur, the prayer of Hezekiah, and many of David's prayers, and the publican's prayer, which is very suitable for every child—"God be merciful to me a sinner."

The Scriptures declare, that the dead, small and great, shall stand before God; that he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil; that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

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Thus, I have very briefly told you of a few of the good things which this precious book contains.

But who is it that speaks these words, "Search the Scriptures?" It is Jesus, it is Christ the Saviour, your best Friend. It is his desire. It is his command; and 184 if you love him, you will keep his commands.

And Jesus himself gives you two very important reasons; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life;" that is, the Scriptures show you how to obtain eternal life. "And they are they which testify of me;" that is, the prophets bore witness to his coming, and they foretold that he should come, to take away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. This is therefore another very powerful reason, because it is Christ that tells you to search the Scriptures.

III. I must now tell you how, or in what manner, you should search the Scriptures, or, in other words, how you should read your Bible.

1. *Read the Scriptures as if you really believed them to be true.* Ignorant men could never have been the authors of a book to make you truly wise. Bad men could not invent a book that will make you good and happy. You cannot read the Bible in a profitable manner, if you think at the same time that what you read 185 is false. The salvation of the soul depends upon the truth of the Bible. Remember, when you read the Scriptures, that they were written by Him who cannot lie.

"His word is everlasting truth; How pure is every page! That holy book shall guide our youth, And well support our age."

2. *Read the Scriptures with a high regard for their value;* as if you really thought the Bible precious. For it is indeed infinitely valuable, "more precious than rubies, more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold."

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"This is the field where hidden lies The pearl of price unknown; Those children are divinely wise Who make that pearl their own."

A poor woman who could not read the Bible rose one hour earlier in the morning, and sat up one hour later in the evening, that she might earn a penny more every day, and with this penny she 16* 186 hired a little boy to read a few chapters in the Bible to her every day.

3. *Read the Scriptures with an earnest desire to understand what you read;* that you may indeed be made wise to salvation. O that you may imitate the example of Timothy, and know the Scriptures even from a child. What you do not understand ask some older person to explain to you. Remember what they tell you, and think of it when you read that part again. Read, that you may know more of God, of his nature and perfections; that you may know more of yourselves as sinners, and of Christ as a Saviour and as the only refuge from the wrath to come.

4. *Read the Scriptures with diligence.* Make it a rule with yourselves to read a part every day. Let no day pass without reading a Chapter at least. Read with attention and care. Think upon what you read. Apply the word to yourselves. When you have read a chapter, endeavour to learn some lesson of instruction from it, 187 and turn the words you have read into a prayer.*

* We would here recommend to our readers a volume published by the *American Sunday-school Union*, entitled the "Scripture Guide." It is a very entertaining and instructive volume, and has a beautiful frontispiece. No child can read it attentively without obtaining a great amount of excellent information about the Bible.

5. *Read the Bible with reverence.* Remember it is the word of God. It is a holy book, a sacred treasure, and ought to be taken care of. Never let the Bible lie carelessly about,

Library of Congress

and when you read it at school, be very attentive, and let others see that you love the Bible.

Lastly. *Read the Scriptures with earnest prayer to God for his blessing upon what you read.* Many persons complain that they do not understand the Bible. It is because they do not pray to God. What did David say? "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." When you read the Scriptures, say, "O Lord, teach me to know 188 and do thy will. Send thy Spirit to assist me while I read, and grant that what I read may make me wiser and better." Pray before you read, and while you read, and after you have read the Scriptures. This, my dear children, is the way to be truly wise indeed.

"Lord, make me understand thy law, Show what my faults have been; And from the gospel let me draw Pardon for all my sins.

"Here would I learn how Christ has died, To save my soul from hell; Not all the books on earth beside, Such heavenly wonders tell."

IV. I will proceed now, my dear children, to tell you some important advantages which those enjoy who search the Scriptures.

1. The Scriptures will impress your minds with solemn truths, as, (1.) That God is everywhere. He is in heaven, in hell and on earth. There is nothing hid from his eyes. "Thou God seest me," should be in your thoughts all the day. 189 (2.) The evil of sin. The Scriptures describe it to be that abominable thing which the Lord hateth, and which you ought to hate. (3.) God is of purer eyes than to behold evil; the wicked shall not stand in his sight; he hateth all the workers of iniquity. (4.) They tell you that there is none good, no, not one, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

2. The Scriptures, applied by the Holy Spirit, will renew your hearts, or make you new creatures in Christ Jesus. Then you will see with new eyes and hear with new ears. Then,

Library of Congress

my dear young friends, shall you rejoice in the Lord, “being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”

3. The Scriptures will inform your minds. They contain the greatest treasure of mental improvement, and will tend to make you not only more pious and moral than all other books can, but likewise more rational and wise. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes.” By reading the Scriptures with care and attention, you will indeed have “more understanding than all your teachers.”

4. The Scriptures will regulate your conduct. “The word of God will be as a lamp unto your feet, as a light unto your path.” “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” Attend to the answer. “By taking heed thereunto, according to thy word.” “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding.” “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

5. The Scriptures will guide your actions. They tell you what is displeasing to God: 191 that there are six things which the Lord hateth; yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: (1.) A proud look; (2.) A lying tongue; and, (3.) Hands that shed innocent blood; (4.) A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations; (5.) Feet that be swift in running to mischief; (6.) A false witness, that speaketh lies; and, (7.) He that soweth discord among brethren. My dear young friends, take notice of these seven things, and endeavour to avoid them.

6. The Scriptures will direct you in the choice of your companions. “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Enter not into the path of the wicked, go not in the way of evil men, avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they have caused some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. But the path

Library of Congress

of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more, unto the perfect 192 day.” Thus, the Scriptures will preserve you from sin, increase your happiness in this life, and set before you an open door, and direct you to endless happiness beyond the sky. To conclude:

7. The Scriptures will powerfully support you at the hour of death. Remember, it is Jesus who gives the command, Search the Scriptures.

“Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are;
While on his breast you lean
your head, And breathe your life out sweetly there.”

Though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you shall fear no evil, for God will be with you. The Scriptures tell you, that “the wages of sin is death;” but in the same verse you read, that “the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ.” This is what the Bible says. Now then, my dear children, obey the voice of Jesus. Search the Scriptures, for this is the only way to be truly wise.

193

“O may I love my Bible more,
And take a fresh delight,
By day to read those wonders o'er,
And meditate by night.”

“This is a precious book indeed! Happy the child that loves to read! 'Tis God's own word, which he has given To show our souls the way to heaven!

”It tells us how the world was made! And how good men the Lord obeyed: Here his commands are written, too, To teach us what we ought to do.

”It bids us all from sin to fly, Because our souls can never die: It points to heaven where angels dwell; And warns us to escape from hell.

“But, what is more than all beside, The Bible tells us, Jesus died! This is its best, its chief intent, To lead poor sinners to repent.

“ Be thankful, children, that you may Read this good Bible every day: 'Tis God's own word, which he has given To show your souls the way to heaven.” 17

195

LECTURE IX. *Danger of Bad Company.*

Prov. i. 10.—“ *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* ”

My dear young friends,

Suppose a person was to come to me, and say, “What do you think of such a little boy, or such a little girl?” I would directly ask, who were your companions; and from that I should be able to judge of your character and tell what kind of children you were.

There is an old proverb, and it is a very true one, “A man is known by the company he keeps.” Bad companions will make you, in time, as bad as they are. Attachments are formed and intimate companions are chosen at a very early age. We find children four or five years old have their little favourites, either at school, 196 or in the neighbourhood, where they dwell. Boys have formed a friendship, at school, which has lasted after they have grown up, and continued till death (which separates dearest friends) has parted them asunder in the years of manhood or old age.

Equally strong, if not more so, is the intimacy formed between girls. They have their favourites among their school-fellows and playmates, without whom they cannot go to or from school; in whose company they greatly delight, and without whom they cannot go to any place of instruction, or amusement. Even the name of a dear companion sounds delightfully, and the thought of a separation causes tears and sorrow.

Library of Congress

Some intimacies formed in youth have been more strongly united by friendship than by the ties of natural affection. Some of you would do more for a particular friend or companion, than you would even for your brother or sister. If Solomon was here, I think he would say to you in 197 the words of the text, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

I. I wish you to take notice of Solomon's parental affection for the young. "My son." Boys! do you hear how Solomon speaks to you? Listen to him, for he was the wisest man that ever lived on earth. "My son" is an expression which is often made use of by Solomon in the book of Proverbs; and by it, he does not mean boys only, but all those who are young in years and under the authority of their parents.

Let us take some notice of these two little words. "My son." There is something very kind and affectionate in them. Hear, my dear young friends. "My sons and daughters," says the wisest of men, "attend to one who has the same regard for you as a parent; one who wishes to promote your present and eternal happiness. My sons and daughters, attend to me, for I assure you that I take a great interest in your welfare. I am very much concerned for the salvation of your souls. 17* 198 'My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved.' I have been young myself. I know the temptations to which the young are exposed, and the snares into which you are most likely to fall. I feel for the dangerous condition in which you are. The paths you walk in are full of traps and snares. Among the various instruments which Satan employs for the ruin of your characters, your bodies, and your souls, there are none more dangerous, or more successful, than bad companions." Listen therefore to the advice of Solomon, and regard the caution which he gives you, with attention.

II. Hear, my young friends, and attend to Solomon's general character of bad companions. He calls them sinners. You often read and hear this word, *sinner*; but few, if any, of you have considered, or know what it means. All children are sinners, by nature; but there are some children who are, by practice, greater sinners than others; I mean, some 199 children are worse than others in the sight of God and man. A sinful child is one whose

Library of Congress

heart is wicked, whose actions are sinful, whose words are idle and filthy, whose thoughts and imaginations are continually evil. Wicked children, such as Solomon calls sinners, have no fear of God before their eyes, and no love to Jesus in their hearts. They will destroy much good.

Wicked children laugh at every thing that is serious and awful, and have no delight in any thing that is good. Sinful children are disobedient to their parents; for those children who do not obey God's commands will not pay any regard to the authority of man. Sinful children never pray; they know not how to pray, and they cannot bear the Bible, because it is a good book. It describes their characters and condemns their conduct. Wicked children, who are called sinners, do not think it any harm to lie, to swear, to steal, to cheat, or break the Sabbath. They laugh at the most sinful and daring actions, 200 and think that they deserve to be commended for them, and thus glory in their shame. Wicked children are called fools by Solomon; he says they make a mock at sin, and that a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Sinners (remember, when I say sinners, I mean wicked children) are idolaters. They adore Satan, the god of this world, though he appears in the shape of a roaring lion. They blaspheme and take the name of the Lord in vain. They are thieves, and rob God of the honour which is due to him as their Creator; and they will rob you of your peace and happiness in this world and of eternal joy in the world to come.

Sinners are liars. They tell you that there is more pleasure and happiness in the ways of sin than there is in the ways of religion. They are Sabbath-breakers; and I may venture to say, that sinners commit more sin and do more mischief on that day than on any other.

Sinners, or wicked children, are murderers: 201 they commit the worst of murders, by their enticements and allurements; by their promises and pretended enjoyments; by their conduct and example. By sin, they crucify the Saviour, they murder their time, waste their money, grieve their friends, break the hearts of their parents, and thus hasten their

Library of Congress

death. But the most awful murder of all is, the ruin of their own souls and the souls of their companions. I do not mean that they kill the soul, but they are the means of its eternal misery. They are double murderers.

But, to finish the character of bad companions, whom Solomon calls sinners in the text, I will remark once more, they are the devil's favourites. Wicked children are among the number of Satan's best friends; and if there is any place in hell more miserable than another, it will be reserved for these favourites, who will receive the wages of sin from Satan their master, and he will pay them to the uttermost. Then, those who have tempted or enticed others into sin will have their misery aggravated and increased, by the curses and bitter reproaches of those whom they have deceived by their conduct and example. We will now attend,—

III. To Solomon's striking account of the dangers to which young persons are exposed, from their snares. O, how artful wicked children are! Solomon tells you how they act, and the manner in which they endeavour to draw others into sin. They do not compel or force you to go with them, but they entice, they allure and draw you into their company by fair promises. Sinners love company in sin. I will endeavour to tell you how they entice.

1. They use enticing words. They tell you of the pleasures they enjoy; of the happy seasons which they have spent in such and such places, with such and such children, or young persons, and they promise you the same enjoyments. But their promises are vain. While they tell you of the pretended joys and imaginary pleasures, they do not tell you of the stings which conscience gives, after their evening's entertainment or their midnight frolic. They tell you it is pleasant to enjoy a sail on the water, or a ride into the country, or a walk in the fields on a fine Sabbath-day; but they forget the anger of that God who has commanded you to "remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy?" They tell you there is no harm in robbing an orchard, or staying out a little later than you ought on a fine summer evening. They laugh at your objections, and persuade you to excuse yourselves by telling

Library of Congress

a lie. They seem to be always merry and always happy. But Solomon says, that even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and that the end of such mirth is heaviness.

2. They make use of enticing actions. A wink with the eye; a beck with the hand; a sign with the finger, have often enticed a child to mischief and sin, and been the cause of shame and sorrow. A forcible pull by the hand or the arm has often led, or I might say forced, one, from 204 the way that is right into the way of evil. You have been drawn in by bad company before you were aware of the consequences. A joke may be carried too far, and a frolic may lead to shame, to fines, to imprisonment and death.

3. By enticing looks. By a look many persons understand much, and looks have done much mischief where words could not be employed.

4. You may be enticed by your school-fellows, your playmates, your brothers and sisters. Sometimes by your parents too, for they may be so ungodly as to promise you a reward for doing that which is not right in the sight of the Lord. A gentleman (I ought to say a sinner or wicked man) used to teach a child to swear, and reward him with a penny. The sound of a violin or fiddle and a quick tune have enticed many into bad company, and ruined them both body and soul. A dancing young woman was the cause of the death of John the Baptist. That was dear-bought pleasure which 205 Herod enjoyed, when he was obliged to give the head of a holy man for his enjoyment.

IV. Let us attend to Solomon's warning, which is given to all, "Consent thou not." And here I shall show you your danger, and then give you the caution.

1. There is great danger in being a companion of sinners. Bad companions will make you less afraid of sin. When you hear them swear, as if there was no God to punish them, and lie, as if there was no hell to torment them: when you see them live as if there was no other world but this, as if there was no happiness to obtain and no misery to avoid; it will make you think very lightly of sin, and in time you will love to sin as much as your companions. You will think as they think, say as they say, and do as they do. Bad

Library of Congress

companions will teach you to laugh at religion, to despise good advice, and treat those children who love their Maker with scorn and contempt. Bad companions will roach you to forget 18 206 the one thing needful, and to put off the great concerns of eternity to a bed of sickness or a dying hour, till it is too late, and you will be led to exclaim, with extreme anguish of soul, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved?" Bad companions will teach you to desire sinful pleasures and entice you to use sinful ways in order to obtain them.

Another evil is, that you will not only be enticed to commit sin, but be tempted to excel in it; to take the lead in every thing that is sinful and wicked. To keep company with sinners will harden your hearts, corrupt your principles, curse your earthly blessing, sear your consciences, destroy your spiritual pleasures, injure your character, hasten your death, deprive you of God's favor, ruin your souls, and plunge you at last into eternal misery.

2. "Consent thou not." Keep no company with sinners; go not with them; enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away. 207 The wicked do not live out half their days. O, my dear young friends, say to all evil companions—

"No longer will I ask your love, Or seek your friendship more; The happiness that I approve Lies not within your power.

"In vain your words accost my ear, And tempt my heart anew; I cannot buy your bliss so dear, Nor part with heaven for you."

The theatre will entice you by saying, "Come, and pay me a visit, and you shall have the most exquisite pleasure." Consent thou not.

Of all the fatal methods made use of by the enemies of God and religion, to ruin the morals of the young, none are more fatal, none more mischievous than bad books. A bad example, though it is productive of great evils, extends only to those who are near

Library of Congress

enough to observe it, and live within the reach of its baneful influence; but a wicked book will poison the mind, and continue to destroy the 208 souls of the young, when the author lies silent in the dust. It is impossible to tell the bounds of its fatal effects, particularly if it is entertaining and amusing. It is then like poison thrown into a river; it is carried to the utmost part of the world; it silently enters the dwelling of the countryman, finds its way to the work-shop and factory, and is destructive to all ages, ranks and conditions of men, but more particularly to the young and thoughtless. To them its breath is poison and its touch death.

The novel will say to you, "Come, and spend an hour or two with me and my dear friend, Romance. You will be highly entertained." Whatever pleasure or entertainment such books may afford you, remember they are forbidden by God. Therefore, consent thou not.

The song-book will say to you, "Make choice of the prettiest of my relations you can find. I will amply reward you, if you commit me to memory. I shall give you pleasure, and teach you a lively and 209 beautiful tune into the bargain." First inquire if this was Mary's choice, if this was that good part which could not be taken away? If it was not, then be warned; consent thou not.

If wicked children say to you, "Your parents sell such and such things; I wish you would get me some; you can have plenty, but I cannot obtain any of these things without their knowing it;" my dear child, consent thou not. For whoso robbeth father or mother, and saith it is no transgression, the same is a companion of the destroyer.

If your companions say, "Do not go to school, but go with us to such a place, where we shall have this and that and other good things;" consent thou not; for though your sin may not be known now, yet you may "be sure it will find you out."

V. I will endeavour to give you a few directions respecting the choice of your companions. See that their conduct is good. Say as David did, "I am a companion of them that fear thee." Let 18* 210 your companions be such as love God. For those whom God loves we

Library of Congress

ought to love. Let them be such little children as love Jesus. If Jesus is their Friend, or they know him as such, they will be your best friends. Let them be such as love prayer, so that when you go to visit them, or they come to visit you, you may be able to go to your heavenly Father and join together in prayer to him for his blessing on you both. There was a little girl who used to pray with her playmates whenever they came to see her. So should you. Let your companions be such as love the Bible. When you are together read the Bible; and tell one another what you think of what you read and hear from the Bible. Let your companions be such as are obedient to their parents and kind to their brothers and sisters. If they are disobedient and unkind, they will lead you to be so too. You will not gain any thing that is good from them. Let them be industrious children. Never keep company with idle children; for they are children who are ripe for every mischief; they are at every one's beck and call, and are in a fair way to that which is worse than nothing. Let your companions be such as love their school and their books; for if they are idle at school, and you sit near them, or choose them for your companions when school is over, they will make you as bad as themselves. Never go with those children who play truant. Let your companions be sensible children; then you will be likely to learn wisdom from them. These are the companions that will do you good and be useful to you. From them you will receive instruction, and to their advice you ought to attend.

“You should be walking with the wise, That wiser you may grow.”

Choose those children for your companions who will stand by you in the time of danger: not those children who come round you only when you have something to give them. You, will have many companions who will seek to be friends with you only for what they can get. Avoid them; for when you need their friendship most, they will be sure to leave you to help yourself as well as you can. “A friend in need is a friend indeed.”

Trust none of your friends with a secret that would hurt your character in the sight of others; because the first time you displease them, they will reveal all your secrets out of

Library of Congress

revenge. When such children have once abused the confidence that you put in them, take heed of trusting them again; they are false friends.

Never be angry with your companions without a real cause. Always examine into the matter. Do not go by what you hear, nor yet by what you see, at all times.

Keep no company with proud children; but let humble and meek children be your companions; for they will not be so easily offended, nor wilfully hurt nor offend you.

Keep not company with cross and ill-natured children; for you will, at one time or another, feel the effects of their temper.

When your companions fall out, or quarrel with each other, do what you can to make peace. Never strive to increase anger already kindled, and so become partners in guilt.

But, my young friends, recollect that there is one Friend, whose friendship you ought to seek above that of every earthly companion. He is one who has done more for you than the dearest earthly friend can ever do; for his love and friendship were so great, that he died for you that you might be happy. He will be your Friend when all others forsake you; in life and death and throughout eternity. Remember that he is one that loveth at all times, and sticketh closer than a brother.

Now, my dear young friends, pray that God would guide you in the choice of your companions, and bless you with serious and sincere friends.

214

“Why should I join with those in play
In whom I’ve no delight, Who curse and swear, but
never pray, Who call ill names and fight?

“I hate to hear a wanton song, The words offend my ears; I would not dare defile my
tongue With language such as theirs.

"Away from fools I'll turn mine eyes, Nor with the scoffers go; I would be walking with the wise, That wiser I may grow.

"From one rude boy that's used to mock, They learn the wicked jest: One sickly sheep infects the flock, And poisons all the rest.

"My God, I hate to walk or dwell With sinful children here; Then let me not be sent to hell, Where none but sinners are."

215

LECTURE X. *Obedience to Parents.*

Col. iii. 20.—" *Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.* "

My dear young friends,

I cannot recommend this highly important subject to you too soon. There is a natural disposition in children to think, to speak and to act against the authority of their parents. And I fear that many of you are not quite free from this fault. Now give me your attention. "Hearken to thy father which begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old."

I will tell you a story which I have read. Abraham Crost had an only son. He gave him, when he married, all the little property he had saved by many years hard labour, on one condition; that was, that the son should take care of the father, 216 and maintain him when he was not able to work. By means of the father's kindness, the son was enabled to buy a house, and a horse and cart, and a piece of ground for a garden. The poor old man worked early and late for his son, because he loved him. He laboured beyond his strength, and at last he caught a violent cold and was not able to work any longer. When he could work no more, the son was obliged to hire a man to do his father's work. Both the son and his wife behaved very unkindly to the poor old man; but little Tommy, his grandson, was

Library of Congress

so dutiful and kind, that he comforted his grandfather greatly in his affliction. At last, the old man was positively told that he must go to the poor-house, for they had something else to do besides nursing him. Shocked at this unfeeling behaviour, he rose from his chair in the chimney corner, and with great difficulty crept away to a little out-house in the garden, where a violent fit of coughing seized him, and he was ready to die. Little Tommy, who 217 heard what his father said, followed his grandfather, who, in the anguish of his mind, desired him to go and fetch the rug from his bed, that he might wrap it round him, and sit in the highway and beg. Little Tommy immediately burst into tears, but thinking it would be undutiful to refuse, he ran into the house. His father met him, and seeing him in tears, inquired where he was going and what was the matter. "I am going," said the child, "for the rug from my grandfather's bed, that he may wrap it round him and go a begging."

"Let him go," said the unfeeling son; "who can bear with his humours?"

"I will go," cried Tommy, and immediately brought the rug, which he carried to his father, saying, "Pray, father, cut it in two; half of it will be large enough for grandfather, and perhaps you may want the other half, when I am grown a man, and turn you out of doors."

Struck with these words, he began to reflect on his conduct, and to consider 19 218 what he should feel at receiving such base treatment from his own son. He hastened to his father and begged his forgiveness, promising not only to treat him with dutiful respect, but to insist on his wife's doing the same. Abraham readily forgave his son, and returned with him into the house, but very soon after closed his eyes in death.

"Some children, cruel and unkind, To parents disobedient prove; How can such children hope to see That God who is the God of loyal?"

I. I shall endeavour to explain the duty; that is, show what is meant by obedience. The word *obey*, or *obedience*, means a reverence for the person of your parents and attention

Library of Congress

to their counsel and advice; an acknowledgment of their superiority, or right to govern, and likewise quiet submission to their authority and rebuke.

First, I will endeavour to inform you what it is to obey your parents. A civil, obliging and modest behaviour is the 219 duty of all of you. It is expected from you. But the Lord is now instructing you, in the text, how to behave at home. Consider therefore who you are taught to obey—your parents, both father and mother; both of them are to be obeyed in the same manner and degree, and you are to love them as your parents.

1. It requires you to treat the persons and characters of your parents with the greatest respect. They are your superiors, your greatest earthly friends and benefactors. It is by no means allowable, my dear young friends, for you to make the faults of your parents the subject of conversation. Do not be heard to say, at any time, that they are guilty of this or that; that you do not approve of this or that. No, rather hide their faults, and conceal them from the knowledge of others. How did the sons of Noah behave? Two of them conducted themselves with respect towards their father, and received the blessing of God; while the other, for making sport of the fault 220 of his parent, brought down upon his head the heavy displeasure of an angry God.

2. To obey your parents is to attend to their instruction and advice. Remember that you know but little. You are liable to be mistaken. They have been more years in the world than you, therefore they must know more and better than you. Children are but of yesterday, and know nothing, compared with what they ought to know, and what they will know if their lives are spared. It is your duty to ask of those who can answer your inquiries, and to obtain all the information you can from those who can instruct you. Ask your parents how you ought to conduct yourselves in this world, and how you should act so as to be happy in the life to come. Never take one important step in life, without first consulting your parents and friends and obtaining their approbation. “My son, hear the instructions of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother; for they shall be 221 an ornament of grace unto thy head, and as a chain of gold about thy neck.”

3. To obey your parents is to observe and do all their commands; to come when they call you; to do as they bid you; not to suffer them to call two or three times before you give them an answer. It is to go where they send you, and nowhere else; and not to stop and play by the way as you go. What they tell you not to do, you must also be careful to avoid. Some parents, instead of commanding and insisting upon the exact obedience of their children with the greatest severity, rather choose to make use of entreaty and persuasion, as being more mild than the other. Some children are deaf to the kindest request and the tenderest persuasion; and their perverse tempers are not softened, nor will their stubborn dispositions bend to the authority of a parent, however kind and good. And here the rod of correction will be necessary. "He that spareth the rod hateth his child; but he that loveth him chastiseth him be 19* 222 times. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it from him. Thou shalt beat him," says Solomon, "with a rod, and shalt save his soul from hell." A child should not be corrected by a parent who is in a passion. Strive first to make him sensible of his fault, and show him that he deserves correction, and then you will do it with justice and judgment.

4. But obedience to parents includes submission to their authority; that is, an acknowledgment of the right they have in you and the power they have over you. This you must attend to from a sense of duty to your parents and of obedience to God. Be not wise in your own eyes, but be humble and submissive, and kind and teachable. Do not murmur at their correction, or turn away from their reproof.

"Their mild correction of each fault, Their kind instructions and the rod, Are all designed, in love, to bring Your wandering spirits back to God."

223

They see your faults, and, while they correct you, they pity you. You know what you have to do. Then do it with a cheerful mind, and not with a downcast look and pouting lip, a murmuring word and slow and unwilling feet. Remember, there are disobedient actions

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as well as disobedient words. "Actions speak louder than words." Remember, this is not pleasing to God.

But I must tell you, secondly, how far this duty extends. The text says, "Obey your parents in all things;" not in one thing, but in every thing. Some may think this hard to be performed. Remember, it is God who speaks the words. He knows what you ought to do, and what you can do, and what you really do. It is required of you to obey your father and mother in all things; every thing that is just and reasonable; every thing that is according to the will of God and his holy commands: and where is the parent that will command any thing to the contrary? If they command you 224 to sin, then you may refuse: if they command you to lie, to steal, to curse, to swear, to break the Sabbath and neglect the Bible, you may refuse to obey them, because their commands are contrary to the commands of God. Nor should any contempt or severity be able to force you to obey the will of your earthly parent, in opposition to the will of your heavenly Father.

Mind all that your parents tell you about rising in the morning; about beginning the day in prayer to God; about your behaviour to your brothers and sisters; about your conduct at school; about companions and amusements; about your duty to God and man. Let the will and desires of your parents form your manners and guide your conduct. Let me remind you, my young friends, of being equally attentive and obliging in obeying your mother as well as your father, for the Scriptures make no difference between them. Hear how Solomon speaks of this duty, and observe the advantages of it: 225 "Keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother; bind them continually upon thy heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee: when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee: when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." Base, indeed, must that child be that can impose upon the weakness, despise the tenderness, set at naught the counsel, injure the feelings and defy the mild authority of a mother; a mother, who deserves all the love and gratitude a child can give. This precept is equally binding upon

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those who have left the house of their parents as upon those children who are still under their care and protection.

II. I will endeavour to tell you, my dear children, why you should obey your parents.

1. Because it is your duty. The words are spoken to children under ten, twelve, or fourteen years of age; though others are not excluded. What condescension it is in the Lord to notice you that are so 226 young in life! My dear young friends, the Lord knows that you have bad hearts. He knows that you are thoughtless, forgetful, ungrateful, undutiful and rebellious. On this account he speaks to you while young. As soon as you are able to read this verse, you are told that you are to obey your parents in all things. Christ likewise speaks to you kindly and for your good. The Lord speaks to you as your mother, your friend and your Saviour. An amiable child was lamenting, with the most sincere grief, the death of an affectionate parent. His companions endeavoured to console him by the reflection that he had behaved to his departed parent with duty, tenderness and respect. "So I thought," replied the child, "while my parent was living, but now I recollect, with pain and sorrow, many instances of disobedience and neglect, for which, alas! it is too late to make atonement."

2. Because you are under great obligations to your parents. If you were to be shut out of doors, to provide for yourselves, 227 could you do it? Who would care for you like your parents?

"Beasts that can graze around the field, Birds that can take the wing and fly; Yea, every insect God hath made Could better help themselves than I."

Who would be so anxious for your welfare? Did they not help you when you could not help yourselves? Has not your mother gazed upon you with delight? Has she not pressed you to her bosom? Has not that bosom afforded a refuge from fear, a repose from weariness, a supply for your returning wants, a world of infantile enjoyments? How many restless hours you have caused her; to be succeeded by wearisome days of attention and labour!

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Have not your parents often wept over you when they saw you in pain and were not able to relieve you? They have left no means untried to give you ease. Hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month have they sat by your bed-side in the time of affliction and watched you when 228 asleep. They have prayed for you when sick; supported you when unable to walk; carried you in their arms; rested you on their knees; listened to your complaints and have endeavoured to remove them; wiped away your tears; complied with your desires; purchased toys and books for your instruction and entertainment; clothed, fed and protected you in every danger, and, perhaps, have saved your lives.

They give you the opportunity of obtaining useful knowledge; neglect it not by your carelessness, idleness and inattention when at school. All this your parents have done, and much more! Then how can you be undutiful and disobedient? Are you not under great obligations to your parents? Can you ever repay them for their kindness? Yes, by your duty and affection; by your attention and obedience you can do much. You can add to their comforts, sweeten their cares, brighten their sorrows, share their griefs, watch them on a bed of sickness, 229 render them comfortable and happy in their last days, and then, with affection and pain, close their eyes in death.

3. Because it is the command of God, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Honour means the continual exercise of fear and love. This precept requires not only that we should show our parents respect and deference, but likewise that we should assist and relieve them, and perform such services for them as they may stand in need of. We read of a majestic, holy God, whom angels and archangels adore, condescending to direct children how they should conduct themselves towards their parents. Will any child now in the presence of God presume to neglect the fifth commandment? Will you not rather say, my dear children, that it is the express command of your Master, your Redeemer, your Sanctifier, your Judge? The character of obedient children goes before them wherever they go, and will secure 20 230 them the love and confidence of the wise and good. How pleasant to think that you

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never wilfully caused your parents' eyes to be filled with tears of anguish, their cheeks to blush with shame, or their bosoms to be pained with an uneasy thought. "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father; for I am the Lord your God."

III. I will endeavour to encourage in the performance of this important duty.

1. By setting before you some examples from the Scriptures. How submissive was Isaac to the authority of Abraham, his father, when he was about to offer him to God as a sacrifice, on the mount Moriah! How great was the affection of Joseph for his father, when he met him at Goshen, and he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while! How different was the conduct of the rest of Jacob's sons! David, while he suffered so much from the envy and cruelty of Saul, discovered great tenderness towards his parents. He presented an address to the 231 king of Moab to let his father and mother reside at Mizpeh till he knew what God would do for him. Imitate the respect of Solomon for his mother; for we read that, when she came to speak to him, he rose up to meet her, and bowed himself before her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for his mother, and she sat on his right hand. But there was one great example more which you ought all to follow; I mean the Lord Jesus. He was subject to the authority of his parents; and when he was dying on the cross he did not forget his mother, but commended her to the particular care and regard of John, the beloved disciple.

"Jesus, who reigns above the sky, And keeps the world in awe, Was once a child as young as I, And kept his Father's law.

"At twelve years old he talked with men (The Jews all wondering stand,) Yet he obeyed his mother then, And came at her command."

2. By the promises which God hath 232 made to obedient children. "Honour thy father and thy mother, (this is called, by the apostle, the first command with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth. Children, obey your parents in

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the Lord, for this is right. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord;" not only pleasing, but well pleasing unto the Lord.

3. You here read that you will enjoy the favour and approbation of God, if you obey your parents. Can you think of any thing more delightful, more honourable, than to do that which is pleasing unto the Lord? This should stir you up to perform it. It is he that commands it, and that looks down from heaven to see how you observe it. He sees when you obey and when you do not. He knows all your private ways and secret thoughts. If you sincerely obey your parents in all things, the Lord is pleased, well pleased with your conduct; and he will bless you with many favours; you shall be comfortable 233 and happy in this world, and eternally happy in the world to come.

"For those who worship God, and give Their parents honour due, Here on this earth they long shall live, And live hereafter too."

I shall now conclude, by mentioning one of the most awful threatenings of God against disobedient children. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Compare this threatening with what you have heard, with the happiness promised to obedient children. Say, would you part with the love of your parents, and the favour of God, for this calamity?

O ye disobedient children, repent of your past conduct. Do not add one pain more to those you have already given your dear parents. Do not provoke God any longer. Your parents are willing to forgive you; your heavenly Father is also 20* 234 willing to forgive you. Let every little child say with me:

"O, holy Saviour, may that day Of future love and grace appear, In which my parents both shall reap The harvest of their faithful care."

"Let children that would fear the Lord Hear what their teachers say; With reverence meet their parents' word, And with delight obey.

"Have you not heard what dreadful plagues Are threatened, by the Lord, To him that breaks his father's law, Or mocks his mother's word!

"What heavy guilt upon him lies! How cursed is his name! The ravens shall pick out his eyes, And eagles eat the same.

"For those that worship God, and give Their parents honour due, Here on this earth they long shall live, And live hereafter too."

235

LECTURE XI. *Duties of the School.*

Prov. xx. 11.—" *Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.* "

My dear young friends,

A good education is one of the greatest advantages which the young can possess. It is better than a fortune. There are many children who are destitute of this great blessing. Ignorance is the parent of many vices; for those who know not how to read generally spend their leisure hours at a tavern, or at the gaming-table. Many improvements have been made in the methods of instruction, and many more may still be made. Teachers of youth ought to be esteemed among the most valuable and useful members of society, especially if they are pious persons; for they will not only care for the 236 morals, but the souls of those children committed to their care. Teachers of youth may be as useful as ministers of the gospel. Their means are extensive. It is a delightful work, when little ones are taught to know their letters and to love Jesus at the same time. There are many schools of a charitable kind, supported by the benevolence of generous hearts, or by

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the contributions of the liberal friends of the rising generation. A variety of remarkable circumstances have laid the foundations of some of these schools. There is, at Bristol, in England, a charitable institution called "Colston's School," from the name of its founder; the scholars wear on their breast the figure of a dolphin in brass, the reason of which is as follows:—Mr. Colston, a rich West Indian merchant, was going to England, his native country, in a ship which contained all his treasure. She sprang aleak, and after having pumped for a long time, day and night, the people on board were expecting every moment that the ship would sink. 237 All at once, to their great astonishment, the leak was stopped. On examination, it was found, that a fish called the dolphin had providentially squeezed itself into the opening, and thus saved all from destruction. Mr. Colston therefore founded a school, and ordered the emblem of a dolphin to be worn as a mark both of his gratitude and his deliverance.

Hear the words of the text, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be upright."

I. I will make some general remarks. Solomon was a wise man. The words of the text are his own words. The words of wise and good men are very much regarded. Children are not wise; they know but little; they stand in need of instruction. A teacher should possess both piety and wisdom. Children go to school to obtain knowledge. A teacher's labour will be in vain unless the parents unite their endeavours with his exertions for the instruction of their children under his care. Sometimes, when teachers and 238 parents do their duty, the children seem to make no progress. When this is the case, there must be something wanting. Two things are necessary to make a good scholar. The first is, a capacity to learn; and the second is, a desire to excel in learning. Where these two are united, there is reason to hope that children will become good scholars.

All children have not the same capacity. There is a great difference. We often expect more from them than we ought. We are apt to think they know much more than they really do. Things are taken for granted, and the building often stands upon a very slender

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foundation. We may soon learn this by examining the children upon some of the most common and familiar terms made use of in schools. Some may know; others may have known, but cannot distinctly recollect; others are entirely ignorant and at a loss what to answer.

In schools there is generally a mixture of children, good, bad and indifferent. 239 By indifferent children I mean those who are sometimes good and sometimes bad. They are not always the same, but may be compared to weathercocks, turned by every fancy, continually changing like the wind.

In schools there are a variety of examples, some good and some bad; but such is the depraved state of all nature, that children love evil more than good.

In all schools there are certain rules and regulations for the government and order of the schools in general. These rules and regulations are made known to the scholars when they enter the school; and when they are made known, they should be carefully observed by the scholars. In many schools there are rules which are common to all; these are, silence, order, docility, attention, diligence, good behaviour, obedience, respect, and still tongues at home with regard to what is done at school. These will apply to every school, and they are what every good scholar should consider and observe.

240

II. Solomon speaks of the doings, or actions of a child. The following are the actions and doings of wicked children: Lying, swearing, cursing, stealing, disobedience to parents, unkindness to brothers and sisters, idleness and mischief, cruelty to dumb animals, improper behaviour at home, at school and in the house of God; disrespect to the aged, scoffing at holy men or holy things. They lead a wicked life, die an awful death, and are miserable forever.

And these are the actions or doings of good children: They pray to God, read the Scriptures, speak the truth, fear God, honour their parents, are kind to all, diligent and

Library of Congress

active in the school, kind to animals, respectful to the aged, ready to relieve the distressed, attentive at school, quiet at home, serious and attentive in the house of God. They live happy, die joyful, and at death enter into eternal glory.

Solomon tells us that even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be 241 pure and whether it be right. If children in general are known, scholars certainly must be known. Therefore I will endeavour to tell you how the good scholar is known by his doings and actions.

1. A good scholar is known by his love of learning, not to read only, but every other branch of education. If you love learning, my dear little friends, you will soon make good scholars; you will soon learn to read, to write and to cipher and to speak any language; but if you dread your lessons and books, it will indeed be tiresome work. You will soon grow weary. You will go from one branch of learning to another, will pretend to learn every thing, and, after all, know little or nothing at all about any of them. You will learn but little while you skim the surface. You must apply your mind and take delight in all you undertake to learn. Then it will only seem an amusement to you; while to the dunce and the idler it will be the toil and the hateful labour of his life. 21

242

2. A good scholar is known by his love to his teacher. If you love to be taught, you will also love the person who can teach you; love those who instruct you, as well as the instruction you receive. A great deal depends upon love to your teachers. If you love them, you will esteem them for their work's sake, you will listen to them with pleasure; but if you hate them, all the advice they give will be received with prejudice. I love to hear you speak of them with pleasure and think of them with gratitude. I love to see you shed tears of affection and respect, especially at leaving the school, where you have learned the best of lessons; where you have received from your teacher, not the cold treatment of mere scholars, but such treatment as children receive from a parent. Love your teacher; love your school and love the scholars. Then the school will not be to you, as it is to many, like

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a place of confinement. You will not be like many who, as they go out of school, shout as if they were 243 glad that they were let at liberty. Many children, in going out of school, remind me more of prisoners or captives who have gained their liberty and are restored to their friends, than of children retiring with pleasure from a place of learning.

3. A good scholar is known by his silence. Nothing can be done when all is noise and confusion. What think you of a hundred scholars all repeating or reading their lessons aloud? What think you of a hundred scholars all repeating their sums aloud, one enumerating, another adding up, a third subtracting, a fourth multiplying, a fifth dividing and a sixth in practice? What unintelligible language! and the teacher at the same time straining his lungs and calling aloud to silence and order, but all in vain. He is vexed, his mind is harassed and perplexed, one scholar asking him one question, and a second another, a third showing his copy, and a fourth waiting with his sum. But this is not all. There is, in many schools, a great deal of idle chit-chat. Some children 244 seem as if they had all the important secrets in the world to tell. Why sit whispering so much to the next scholar that is near you? Why hinder him and yourself too? Why are four or five to lay down their books or their pens to listen to your nonsense? Be attentive to your tasks and keep silence while in school. Speak not at all, unless it be to ask a question for information, either of a scholar who knows better, or of your teacher.

4. A good scholar is known by his diligence. He has no idle moments to spend, "But, like the little busy bee, Improves each shining hour." O how many shining hours some children lose! They do not try to improve, they take no pains at all with their copies, but hurry them over, and seem glad when they are done, that they may have time to spend in idleness and talk.

5. A good scholar will endeavour to keep good order. He will not run all 245 over the school hunting for his books, or trying to get the scholars to help him to learn his lesson or do his sum. You will always see him in his own place. He will be careful of his books. They will be neatly covered, without scrawls or dog's-ears, without blots or dirt. He will

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not write his name in twenty places, as some children do, and make their books not fit to be seen. When he is spoken to he is all attention. He listens to the instructions given with eager desire, and when they are finished you may read in his countenance that he is pleased that he knows more than before. He is also a very careful boy with regard to the school. He is careful not to bring dirt into it, or make any dirt in school by tearing paper and throwing it on the floor. He is careful not to read any books in school but those that he ought to read. He will not waste his time in looking at the pictures instead of learning his lessons. He is careful to read well, to pronounce his words fully, 21* 246 clearly and distinctly, so that you may easily understand him.

6. A good scholar is known by his punctual attendance at the appointed hour. You will know him by his cheerfulness and thoughtfulness. He hastens to school with his books under his arm or in his bag. He is fearful of being too late, but is seldom a minute behind the proper time. He is not afraid of summer's heat or winter's cold. A little snow or rain will not keep him at home. He regularly attends at school and is desirous of learning something new and useful every day. If he is absent from school, it must be for something very particular. He is perhaps detained at home by illness

7. A good scholar is known by his respectful behaviour. No black looks, no contemptuous whispers, no "answering again," when he is spoken to by his teacher. When at any time he is reproved or punished, he is not angry, but sorrowful. "This," he says, (and he feels what he says,) "is because it is for my 247 good. My teacher is wiser and knows better than I do; therefore I will endeavour for the time to come to avoid the fault for which I am reproved." He never leaves the school without paying those marks of respect which are due from a good scholar to his teacher.

Once more: A good scholar is known by his good example. He is determined that none of the scholars shall be the worse for his example, but if possible the better. He is resolved that none shall hereafter say that they should not have been punished had it not been for him; that he was their leader in robbing orchards, spoiling birds' nests, or playing

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truant. O, my young friends, be very careful to set a good example while you are scholars. Remember how many there are who will be ready to follow you if you set a bad one. You may be the means of leading others by your example to shame and disgrace, to ruin in this life and everlasting misery in the world to come. I cannot finish the marks of the 248 good scholar without saying, that while he endeavours to set a good example before the rest of the scholars, he will also pray for them; tell them of the love of Jesus, and exhort them to seek heavenly wisdom from that God who “giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not.” He will be desirous of pointing out the value of their souls, the beauties of the Bible and the necessity of a Saviour. He will tell them of a teacher that is heavenly and divine, and entreat them to go with him to the school of Christ, to sit at his feet and receive lessons of heavenly, wisdom—to learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart. This is the good scholar, and these are the duties of the school. If all scholars were known by these marks, what happy scholars you would be! what a pleasure it would be to be your teacher! what a happy school it would be! You might almost say, “I have been there and still will go, 'Tis like a little heaven below.”

An idle scholar is soon known: he 249 carries the marks of a dunce on his forehead; you may see them in his looks. When he walks to school, he stops at every corner of the street, he peeps into every window, and talks to every idle child he meets. His lessons are but half learnt and very carelessly repeated. His words are badly pronounced and his copy badly written. His fingers are stained with ink and his books are full of blots and scrawls. You may soon know an idle scholar by his looks. He is whispering or talking aloud; he is looking about him or cutting and spoiling his books and the desk; he is continually bringing something to school either to eat or to play with; his pockets are full of fruit or sweetmeats; his lessons are a burden to him; he is glad when school is dismissed that he may go to his play. He is careless of every thing; alike indifferent to rewards or punishments; contented to remain stationary, while others, who were far behind, overtake and travel far beyond him in the paths of wisdom. He is a trouble to his 250 teacher, a hinderance to the rest

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of the scholars, a disturbance to the school, a grief to his parents, and a shame and a disgrace to himself and all his companions.

“Let me ask you one question, if you please, sir.”

Well, my young friend, what is that?

“How is a good monitor to be known?”

He should be gentle and patient to the younger scholars, and teach them in the same manner as he would like to be taught himself. He must not speak rudely or sharply to them. He must not call them names or beat them; but if they act improperly, he should inform his teacher, that he may reprove or punish them as he thinks proper. He should be civil, impartial and obliging to all. He should endeavour to assist them when in trouble or difficulty, and take the part of the younger scholars when any of the elder scholars would hurt or ill-treat them. He should be a peace-maker and a friend to all. This a monitor ought to be in addition to the marks of a good scholar.

251

I should now endeavour to improve this subject. Children should always obey the rules of the school where they go: there are right doings and wrong doings, or pure and impure actions. How careful children ought to be, and watchful, that their actions may be such as they shall never be ashamed of, neither in this world nor when they stand before the bar of God.

Take heed that you are not the worse for going to school. Remember, that “evil communications corrupt good manners.” Let your conversation, your conduct, your example prove that you are a good scholar and desirous of gaining useful knowledge. Let the great end of learning to read be, that you may be able to read the Holy Scriptures, which “are able to make you wise unto salvation.” Let the great end of your learning to write be, that you may be able to communicate to those who are afar off the glad tidings

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of salvation. Let the great end of arithmetic be, that you may be taught 252 “so to number your days that you may apply your hearts unto wisdom.” To seek the salvation of your souls, seek to be taught by the Holy Spirit and the “great Master of assemblies,” at whose feet Mary sat when she made choice of that part which could not be taken away from her.

There is, in some schools, what is called a weekly review; be prepared for it, and remember that Christ will review your actions, both good and bad, at the last day.

There are, in some schools, quarterly examinations. Let your lessons be well repeated, that you pass through the examination with honour to yourselves, with pleasure to your teacher, and with satisfaction to all who may be present.

There is, in all schools, a general vacation or holiday once a year; some give a longer, some a shorter time. It is a necessary relaxation to your own minds and your teacher's. Health requires it, that he may return to his duty, to his arduous and important employ, with new zeal and redoubled vigour.

253

The hour of death may be called a vacation or breaking up. Death destroys the body and separates the soul from it. The vacation destroys order and separates the scholar from his teacher. There is an end of lessons and learning for a time. There is no work nor device in the grave. At death, all our labour and toil will cease. The Bible cannot be read there, no tables repeated there, no copies written there. Those fingers that now hold the pen will be cold and stiff. No account can be cast up there. Now you leave the school-room and its duties for a time: then you will return to the house appointed for all living. But remember this,—O take notice of it, my dear young friends,—at the morning of the day of judgment, you will have a sum to do of which all the rules in arithmetic can furnish no example and give no answer. Who can enumerate the ages of eternity! Who can add to eternity! Who can subtract or take from eternity! Who can multiply eternity! Eternity cannot

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be 22 254 divided! Happy are those who have learned that holy art, that divine arithmetic, of numbering their days and applying their hearts to wisdom.

“Lord of the starry world on high, To thee I raise my infant cry; O hear my lisping prayer, and grant The mercies which thou know'st I want.

‘Since I to thee my being owe, Teach me betimes thyself to know; And give me grace to walk the road That leads to glory and to God.

“To this great end, my parents bless, And crown their labours with success; That they may have the joy to see Their offspring training up for thee.

“Give me a ready active mind, To useful knowledge still inclined; And grant my memory may retain What from my teacher's care I gain.

But most of all, assist me, Lord, To study and to love thy word; Let me its sacred truths imbibe, And in my life those truths transcribe.

“Impress it on my mind, that I, A child of earth, am born to die; Yet that my spirit shall survive, And through eternal ages live.”

255

LECTURE XII. *A Word in Season; or, Death and Judgment.*

Rev. xx. 12.—“ *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.* ”

My dear young friends,

At this season of the year,* you are more particularly reminded, by the objects around you, of your latter end. All nature appears to be dead. The trees are without leaves and the gardens without flowers: the waters are bound in fetters of ice, and the ground is covered

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with frost and snow. Christmas is past. The year will soon be gone, and New-year's day is near at hand.

* Winter.

You live in a world of changes, and pass through a variety of scenes. Sometimes a dark cloud appears, and then a 256 bright one. The wheel of nature is continually turning round: sometimes one part is uppermost and sometimes another. One event regularly follows another. At the command of God, darkness goes away and daylight comes: the day gives place to night, and the night again to day. It is now winter, but this will be followed by spring: then comes the summer, afterwards fall or autumn, and then the winter will return again. "Every purpose has its time, and to every thing there is a season." For while the earth remaineth, "seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease."

"Thus shall the moving engine last, Till all his saints are gathered in; Then for the trumpet's dreadful blast, To shake it all to dust again."

You are now in health, but pain and sickness may soon come upon you. You are young, but not too young to die. Death and judgment are subjects which are by no means agreeable to the young. 257 You are looking forward to years of pleasure, to a long life of health and happiness: but you are born to trouble. Your days may be few and evil. You appear like flowers in spring. You are the objects of delight and admiration: but "man cometh up like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not; he dieth and wasteth away, yea, he giveth up the ghost, and where is he? Your days are determined, the number of your months are with God; he hath appointed thy bounds and over them you cannot pass. It is appointed unto all once to die."

I stand on holy ground.

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The subjects of this lecture are serious and awful; full of the most important consequences, not only to the children now present, but to every child in this wide world. O my soul, how many are now plunging into an awful eternity! O my young friends, what shall I say? Can I hope to prevail on any of you to attend to these serious things? They belong to 22* 258 you all. Every one is equally concerned. Not a child here can say, "I have nothing to do with death and judgment." These bodies must return to the dust from whence they were taken, and your souls to God who gave them.

"The dust returns to dust again, The soul, in agonies of pain, Ascends to God, not there dwell, But hears her doom and sinks to hell."

Let me lead you to an open grave. There I see you weeping over a father or a mother, a brother or a sister, standing by that house which is appointed for all living. I see your eyes filled with tears, and your little hearts ready to burst with grief. Shall I address you? Shall I speak in vain? Shall I spend my strength for naught? O thou Eternal Spirit of God, soften every hard heart; impress every mind. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

"Stoop down, my thoughts, that used to rise, Converse a while with death; Think how a gasping mortal lies, And pants away his breath.

259

"His quivering lip hangs feebly down, His pulses faint and few; Then speechless, with a doleful groan He bids the world adieu.

"But oh! the soul that never dies, At once it leaves the clay; Ye thoughts, pursue it where it flies, And track its wondrous way.

"Up to the courts where angels dwell, It mounts, triumphant there; Or devils plunge it down to hell, In infinite despair."

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“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.” First, Death is mentioned in the words of the text. “And I saw the dead.” What is death? Ah, my young friends, we must experimentally know what death is. You and I must die. Let us think of death. It is a serious thing to die. Think what it is to be sick: what pain you then feel. But what is that, when compared with death? Let us suppose the king of terrors standing before our eyes, with the fatal dart in his hand. His arm is already 260 lifted up; the blow is certain, and the aim is sure. Our last and solemn hour is now come, and we must bid a long, long farewell to all things here below. Our lips quiver; our breath fails; our sight grows dim; our hands and feet are bedewed with a cold sweat, and our cheeks covered with the paleness of death! What an affecting thought. This warm active body becomes cold and still; these feet will cease to walk; these hands will no longer obey the will; these eyes will be closed; this tongue will speak no more; this heart will cease to beat, and my blood cease to flow; the pulse stops, and the lungs no longer perform their office; the breath is gone, to return no more. The shroud is sent for, and wrapped round the body; the coffin is made, and the grave is dug. Nothing now remains but to carry you to your long home, and cover you with earth, and leave you to mingle with the dust out of which you were made.

It is an awful thing to die. Death is 261 terrible to the wicked, for they “are driven away in their wickedness.”

“Death! 'tis a melancholy day To those who have no God; When the poor soul is forced away To seek her last abode.”

At death, all your plans and schemes must be laid aside: all your joys and sorrows will be ended: you must leave all your playmates and playthings behind you. Then you will hear no more sermons; sing no more hymns; read no more chapters; repeat no more catechism. Your place at school, at church, and at home by your own fireside, will be empty. You will never sit there nor here, any more, forever. Remember, you cannot be good children after you are dead, if you are bad all your life-time. You cannot then pray to

Library of Congress

God for pardon of your sins: you cannot seek the Lord Jesus Christ for your Saviour, when you are confined in the grave. O, my dear children, think of death.

262

“O, now improve the hours you have, Before the day of grace is fled; There's no repentance in the grave, Nor pardon offered to the dead.”

What is it that makes you so much afraid of death? It is because you are wicked. Sin makes you afraid to die, and it is sin that is the cause of death; it is part of the punishment which God told our first parents, Adam and Eve, would be the consequence of breaking his commands and eating the forbidden fruit. “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

All men must die, young and old, rich and poor. Death pays no respect to any, but visits all in their turn. To-day he takes the king from his throne; to-morrow the beggar from the dunghill. To-day he takes the infant from the bosom of its mother; to-morrow a lovely youth from school.

263

“For when he summons, then we all must go, To endless happiness or endless wo.”

Your wisdom will not save you from death: Solomon died, and so must you. Your beauty will not save you from death: Abigail died, so must you. Your strength will not save you: Samson died, so must you. Your goodness or piety will not save you: David died, and so must you. Your sparkling eyes and your rosy cheeks will not save you from the pointed arrows of death. Your gold and silver will not bribe death, nor tempt nor persuade him to spare you a little longer. You know you must die. You often feel sick and ill, and sooner or later it will end in death. You often see funerals pass as you walk along the streets. Scarcely a day passes but some one is carried to the grave. Let every child say:—

Library of Congress

"There is an hour when I must die, Nor do I know how soon 'twill come; How many children, young as I, Are called by death to hear their doom!"

The time when and the manner how ²⁶⁴ you may die are both unknown to you. Nothing is so sure as death, and nothing so uncertain as the time. You may be too old to live, but you can never be too young to die; you should therefore live every hour as if you were to die the next.

The Assyrian king, who spent his life in wickedness, said, when he came to die, "O if I had thought I should have died as I do, I would not have lived as I did."

A fine boy, about twelve years of age, set off to school at two o'clock. He was met by a boy riding a horse. The boy asked him to ride the horse to the stable, to which he consented. He had not been seated more than two minutes before the horse stumbled and threw him. In the fall, his thigh was broken in two places; and before he could crawl away a loaded wagon passed over him, and after lying two hours, in the greatest agony, his soul entered into the eternal world.

The manner in which you may die is at present unknown. Some die what is ²⁶⁵ called a natural death, and others what is called a violent death. There is but one way into this world, but there are many ways out of it. Some die a painful and others an easy death. Some there are who are called very suddenly into the eternal world. O, my dear young friends, holy very important and necessary it is to be always prepared to die.

"Dangers stand thick through all the ground To push us to the tomb, And fierce diseases wait around To hurry children home."

Thus we find that "it is appointed unto all once to die, and after this the judgment. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." By these words we find that not only the hour of death, but,

Secondly, The day of judgment is mentioned in the words of the text. From the tenth verse to the end of the chapter, we have a brief but particular account of the proceedings of the day of judgment, 23 266 that great, that awful day, for which all other days were made.

That there will be a day of judgment is plain from the words of the text. This is not the only part of the word of God where the day of judgment is mentioned. I could tell you of many others, but two or three will be sufficient. "For God will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right. For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Yes, my young friends, the great day of his wrath will come, when Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not his gospel.

If there is to be no day of judgment; if there is no account to be given, no reckoning to be made, no tribunal before which you are to be brought, why are you afraid to die? Why hide your sins as if you were ashamed of them? Why 267 tell so many stories to cover your faults, and thus endeavour to escape punishment? Why are you afraid of the anger of God? Your own conscience condemns your conduct: your sins will certainly find you out. It is conscience that reminds you of a judgment to come. It was conscience that made Felix tremble when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and a judgment to come. Why did the knees of Belshazzar smite, one against the other, when he saw the handwriting on the wall, and was told by Daniel that he was weighed in the balance and found wanting? It is conscience that approves of that which is right, and disapproves of that which is wrong. That silent monitor is placed by God in every bosom. Attend to the voice of conscience. Despise not the advice of conscience, and never act contrary to it.

Did not God judge the wickedness of man in the days of Noah, when the wicked were swept away by a flood of 268 water! Did not God judge Sodom and Gomorrah, when he poured out fire and brimstone and destroyed the wicked people and children that were

Library of Congress

there? If God has punished some for their wickedness, you may depend on it that he intends to punish all.

Jesus Christ is appointed by God the Father to be the Judge of the world at the last day. He will appear in his own glory, in the glory of his Father and of his holy angels. Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; the wicked shall weep and wail because of him.

A good man, who had served God for thirty years, had five sons and two daughters, who, in spite of all his advice and all his prayers and tears, were very wicked children. In January, 1809, he dreamed that the day of judgment was come. He saw the Judge on his great white throne; the holy angels sat around him, and all nations were gathered before him. He and his wife were standing on the right hand of the Judge, but he could not see any of his children. "I cannot bear this," he said, "I must go and seek them." So he went to the left hand and found them all seven standing together, tearing their hair and beating their breasts and cursing the day that ever they were born. As soon as they saw him, they caught hold of him and said, "O father, we will part no more." He said, "My dear children, I am come to try, if possible, to get you out of this dismal situation." He took them all with him; but when he was come within bow-shot of the Judge, he thought he cast an angry look at him and said, "What do thy children with thee now? They would not take thy warning when on earth, they shall not share the crown with thee now. Depart, ye cursed." At these words he awoke, bathed with sweat and tears. He related his dream to his family one Sunday evening. The effect of it was that five of the children were converted to God. The other two were afterwards brought to acknowledge the truth, in answer to prayer. 23*

270

Thirdly. We find by the words of the text who those are that will be judged: the small and the great. Children, as well as those who are grown up, must stand before God: the young and the old. There you must stand and give an account of all your bad actions, of all your evil thoughts and idle words. For you must give an account of all the deeds done in the

Library of Congress

body, both good and bad. Even the secrets of your hearts will be made known, and for every idle word you must give account to God. Awful thought! How many bad, wicked, sinful words have you spoken!

“And must the crimes that we have done Be read and published there! Be all exposed before the sun, While men and angels hear?”

“But,” says a little girl, “why must we stand before God? What will he say to us? What actions shall we have to give an account of?”

Lying, Sabbath-breaking, disobedience to parents, wasting your time in idleness 271 and mischief, and many more that I cannot now name. Some children are very sly; but these sly children do a great deal of mischief. Some are very bold in sin; but at that day they will be ashamed. Your secret sins which have been committed in the black and dark nights will be exposed. There are many sins which you have committed that are only known to God and yourselves. How many stories have you told, and then said that you were only in sport. It was only a joke; you did not mean what you said. Many things you have said, yet it would have been far better for you to have been born dumb than to have uttered such filthy words and taken the name of the Lord in vain: for you must answer for all your cursing and swearing.

Let those who laugh and mock at serious things take care, for they must give an account of what they say.

There will be many witnesses against you, so that you will not be able to make any excuse. Your parents must be against 272 you. I must be a witness against you at that day, if you do not repent and seek for the pardon of your sins before you die. Angels will witness against you. Your companions will also be witnesses against you. Conscience will also accuse you. Satan will accuse you, and God himself, who searches all hearts, will

Library of Congress

punish you as sinners. The Judge will be impartial. He will pay no more respect to those children that are rich than he does to those who are poor.

The consequences of the day of judgment to good children will be delightful. It will wipe off all that disgrace and scorn and contempt that have been thrown on them by the wicked. We shall then know who loved God and Jesus Christ most. And he will love them, and tell them so before men, angels and devils. He will say to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom."

But how awful will the consequences of the day of judgment be to those who know not God! Wicked, ungodly children! 273 They will be exposed; their secret sins will be brought to light; they will be driven from God's tribunal with a curse, and tormented in hell forever! Hear their awful and tremendous sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This is the last closing scene. The sentence will be executed. This is awful to think of, but much more tremendous to experience. O, my dear children, my bowels yearn over you. I pity your awful condition from my soul. O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night over the misery of wicked and careless children.

I shall *conclude* these important and solemn subjects, by a few remarks, suitable to you, my young friends; to the subject before me, and to the season of the year.

1. Death may have been very near to some of you in the past year. Is it so, my young friends? Does the colour of your garments show that what I say is true? 274 Has not death taken from you a dear companion? Has he not separated from you a beloved school-fellow, one who sat near you at school, perhaps on the same bench, or in the same class? But the place is now filled by another. Is it true that you have been deprived of a sister or a brother? Have you lost a tender father or an affectionate mother? Ah, my young friends, he has also visited me the last week, and snatched from me a beloved child. My feelings and

Library of Congress

yours are something similar. I can “weep with those who weep.” Even now I see the tears starting from your eyes. O that you may be prepared to die whenever death may come.

2. I remark that you must all die. When I look into yonder grave-yard, I see many hillocks, many grave-stones; perhaps there may be an open one, which will, ere long, be filled by a cold and lifeless body.

“And must this body die, This mortal frame decay? And must these active limbs of mine Lie mouldering in the clay?”

275

Is it an infant, a child, or a young person in the bloom of youth? Is it one who has seen many summers, and passed through many winters in this vale of tears? Ah, my young friends, it has been said, Xerxes wept over his vast army of 1,000,000 men, to think they would all die within a hundred years. I might weep to think you will not only die in that time, but that your eternal state will be unalterably fixed. Before a hundred years are past and gone, you will be happy or miserable forever.

3. Many of you (perhaps I might say, all of you) are unprepared to die. I would not for a thousand worlds say that you may count on many years to come. Long life falls to the lot of very few of Adam's children. The remainder of your days on earth may be but few. What if an angel should come down from heaven, and tell one of you little boys or one of you little girls, that before this year expires, you must die and appear before the bar of God!

276

My dear children, this year is almost closed; yet near as it is to the end, you may die. I repeat it, before Wednesday next,* an arrow from the bow of death may pierce your heart! Are you fit to die? Are you sure of going to heaven, if you should die? or do you think that you are so sinful that you never can be admitted into that holy and happy place?

* New-year's day.

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4. If you are not prepared for the hour of death, how will you be able to stand before God at the day of judgment? What a solemn, awful day it will be to thousands! I fear that you would give but a sad account of yourselves. How have you spent your time? What answer will you make when the Judge shall ask a reason for your sinful, wicked conduct in the present world?

5. Remember that “we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.” We must all be there! The small and great must stand before God. Your parents 277 and friends, your brothers and sisters must be there. God forbid that I should be a witness against you at that day. However painful the thought may be to me now, yet it must be so. I must declare before all the world, before angels and men, that I have solemnly warned you of your danger. Your conscience tells you so at this moment: but at the day of judgment it will speak in a much louder voice and in a more unwelcome tone. ‘Prepare to meet your God!’ ‘Flee from the wrath to come.’ Jesus waits to receive you in this arms,—

“And he can make a dying bed Feel soft as downy pillows are.”

God is waiting to be gracious. Let me entreat you, let me beg of you, let me persuade you, to seek for pardon and a new heart. If you value your own souls; if you wish to be happy when you die; if you wish a crown of glory and eternal joy, think on what I have said; think on what you have now heard. O that you 24 278 were wise, that you understood these things; O that you would consider your latter end.

6. Adore the goodness and mercy of God in sparing you another year. How has the year been spent? In what manner have the months, the weeks, and the days been employed? What have you been doing all your life-time?

“Can you give for every day Some good account at last?”

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What do you think? Are not some of you weary of attending to this disagreeable and melancholy subject? It is a serious thing to die, and very awful indeed if you are unprepared for death.

"Oft as the bell, with solemn toll, Speaks the departure of a soul: Let each one ask himself, 'Am I Prepared, should I be called to die?"

"Only this frail and fleeting breath Preserves me from the jaws of death; Soon as it fails, at once I'm gone, And plunged into a world unknown.

279

"Then, leaving all I loved below, To God's tribunal I must go; Must hear the Judge pronounce my fate, And fix my everlasting state.

"But could I bear to hear him say, 'Depart, ye cursed, far away; With Satan, in the lowest hell, Thou art forever doomed to dwell.'

"Lord Jesus! help me now to flee And fix my hopes alone on Thee: Apply thy blood, thy Spirit give, Subdue my sin and in me live.

"Then when the solemn bell I hear, If saved from guilt, I need not fear, Nor would the thought distressing be, Perhaps it next may toll for me."

280

LECTURE XIII. *The Missionary's Farewell.*

1 John ii. 18.—" *Little children, it is the last time.* "

My dear young friends,

Amidst a multitude of preparations and a variety of pressing engagements, I have taken this opportunity of bidding you *farewell*. I am now about to close my public labours among

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the young in this part of the world. In a few days I shall sail for India, where there are thousands of children who never heard of Jesus, of God, of heaven or hell.

“How do I pity those that dwell Where ignorance and darkness reigns; They know no heaven, they fear no hell, Those endless joys, those endless pains.”

That I shall see you again in this world is at present uncertain. I had taken my farewell of you once before; but God, 281 whose ways are not like ours, brought me back again, I hope for your good: yes, my dear young friends, I hope there are those before me who will have reason to bless God for my return. When I consider that, since I landed the second time in this city, more than a thousand children have heard of Jesus; and that on my way and while in the city of New York, I preached to more than three thousand different children; I am constrained to say that surely I have not laboured in vain, nor spent my strength for naught. God has said, that his word shall not return unto him void, but that it shall accomplish the thing whereunto he hath sent it.

My dear young friends, as it is the last time, I hope you will be attentive. The salvation of your souls lies very near my heart; death may come, and your ears may never again hear the sound of the preacher's voice addressing you from this sacred place. You may not hear such instructions any more. I have read 24* 282 of a missionary who went to preach to the heathen. They were displeased, they would not listen to him, and were going to murder him. He told them how cruel and unkind it was in them to endeavour to take away the life of a man who had them all in his heart, at the same time opening his bosom, where he had concealed a small looking-glass. The savages came, they saw their faces in the glass; they were surprised and really thought that what he said was true. This glass was indeed the means of turning aside their hatred, and saved the life of the missionary. Ah, my dear children, could you see my heart, could you at all times know my thoughts, you would see and think that the salvation of your souls mounts above every thought. All other things seem to me of little importance.

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Remember how I have been with you at all seasons, and have taught you publicly and from school to school. You have heard my prayers, seen my anxiety, witnessed my tears. I have visited you 283 when sick, and instructed you when in health. Many a weary step have I walked, to tell you of Jesus and remind you of the time appointed for the monthly lecture. Yes, my young friends, I may say, that "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." Neither summer's heat, nor winter's cold, have kept me back from endeavouring to do you good. O that the Lord may bless my feeble efforts, and the instructions, be remembered and read with gratitude and pleasure.

"I pray that you may early prove The Spirit's power to teach; You cannot be too young to love That Jesus whom I preach."

I. As this is the last time, there are some important things which I hope you will consider. You have been told, that there is a God who made all things, the heavens over your heads and the earth under your feet; the sun, moon and stars are the work of his hand; he made the fowls of the air; the fishes of the sea, and 284 the beasts of the field. God created you. He formed your bodies from the dust of the earth, and breathed into them "the breath of life."

He requires that you should love him with all your heart, and serve him with all your strength; that you should obey all his commands, and at all times fear to offend him. You ought to say, and every good child will say, "My heart shall be in pain to hear Children affront the Lord above; 'Tis that great God whose power I fear, That heavenly Father whom I love."

You are all sinners, young in years, but old in sin. While you live in sin, you are enemies to God. You cannot go to heaven if you die in sin, but must be cast into hell, together with all those that forget God.

You are all in danger of eternal misery in hell; because the wrath of God will be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men You have been warned to flee from the 285 wrath to come; but you have despised the warning. The Lord has called, and you have refused; he has stretched out his hand, but you regarded it not. You have set at naught all his counsels and would have none of his reproof. The Lord also will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a desolation and your destruction as a whirlwind: when distress and anguish come upon you, then you shall call, but he will not answer; you shall seek the Lord early, but shall not find him, because you hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.

If you, by reason of sin, are in danger of eternal misery, where will you find a refuge from the wrath of God? He is angry with you every day. Jesus alone can save you; his love to sinners caused him to make himself an offering for sin. His blood was shed for the remission of sins. His arms are open to receive you. "Him that cometh unto me," saith Jesus, "I will in no wise cast out." O pleasing, 286 delightful words, "*in no wise cast out.*" Though your sins exceed the number of the stars of heaven, or the sands on the sea shore, he will not refuse to pardon them. Come then, my dear young friends, come to Jesus, and he will not send you away. O that you may seek him early, and find him precious to your souls. Remember, there is no one, either in heaven or earth, that can save you, but Jesus. Trust in him; plead his merits, his sufferings and death; and trust in him for the salvation of your souls, for a place in heaven and an unfading crown of glory.

Your hearts are wicked; yes, they are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. "He that trusteth to his own heart," says Solomon, "is a fool;" therefore, trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding. Keep your hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life. Your hearts of stone must be changed to hearts of flesh.

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“True, you are young, But there's a stone Within the youngest breast, Or half the crimes that you have done Would rob you of your rest.”

While you have wicked hearts, you cannot do any thing that is good. There is none that doeth good. All your actions will be sinful; you will not love God; you cannot bear to hear of death or judgment, heaven or hell; every thing that is serious will be disagreeable to you: but without a new heart, without you are made new creatures, without holiness, none shall see the Lord.

Another important truth is, that you cannot change your own heart; you cannot be good of yourselves. God must make you good, and he can do it, and will do it, if you pray to him. He will give you his Holy Spirit, if you ask him for it. Therefore remember that the Holy Spirit alone can renew your hearts: he can make you see what great sinners you have been against God. Remember that the eye of God is always upon you; that you are 288 accountable to him for all you think, say, or do. He has taken notice of your conduct while you have been in this house. “Keep thy foot,” says Solomon, “when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil.” God knows all the lectures you have heard, all the hymns you have sung, all the instructions you have received; he knows all the sermons you have heard; yes, for every word that you have heard, you must give an account at the last day. God will judge the secrets of men; he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

II. As this is the last time, I will endeavour to give you some advice, which I hope you will remember.

Hate sin of every kind, in every shape. Flee youthful lusts. Abstain from the very appearance of evil. O think of the consequences of sin; it caused God to deluge the world with a flood of water. 289 It caused God to rain, from heaven, fire and brimstone upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and destroy all the cities of the plain with a fiery flood. Sin

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opened the bottomless pit, and kindled those flames which will never be quenched. But, what is more still, sin was the cause of all the sufferings of the Son of God. Sin will ruin your souls and plunge them into eternal misery.

Begin and end every day with prayer to God. Pray frequently, earnestly and sincerely. In every trial and distress, seek the Lord by prayer; pour all your sorrows into his bosom, cast your burden upon him, for he careth for you. How can you go out in the morning without prayer to God? You cannot protect yourselves from danger. You cannot preserve your souls from sin. Never lie down in your beds before you have begged the protection of Him whose arm is almighty. How can you close your eyes to sleep, when you know not but that you may not wake before the morning of the day of judgment? 25

290

Always speak the truth. Do not tell a lie even in jest. Remember the punishment of Gehazi. Think of the awful death of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. God could strike you dead, when you tell stories, as easily as he did them. "Therefore, because there is wrath, beware, lest he take thee away with a stroke, and then a great ransom shall not deliver thee."

"O may you always watch your lips, Lest you be struck to death and hell; Since God a book of reckoning keeps, For every lie that children tell."

Love God: love him for his goodness; love him for his mercy. Love the Saviour: love him for what he has done for you, for what he is now doing for you, and love him for what he has promised to do for you.

Be not careless about the eternal welfare of your soul, nor inattentive to the instructions of your teachers. Forget not God in your mirth. Indulge not angry words. A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. 291 Despise not that which is good. Swear not at all. Bless, and curse not. Let your communications be yea, yea, and nay, nay. Think not to hide any of your sins, for be sure your sins will find you out. O, my dear

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young friends, seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let not your goodness be like the morning cloud or early dew, which soon passeth away. Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it, because the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

III. As this is the last time, I will remind you of some duties which you ought to perform.

Obedience to parents. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy 292 God giveth thee. Love your brothers and sisters; be kind to them all; do all you can to assist them; teach them and pray for them. Pay the greatest respect to the aged; take heed of mocking and despising gray hairs. Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and shalt honour the old man, saith the Lord. Remember the punishment of those children that mocked Elisha.

“When children, in their wanton play, Served old Elisha so; And bade the prophet go his way, ‘Go up, thou bald head, go:’

God quickly stopped their wicked breath, And sent two raging bears, That tore them limb from limb to death, With blood and groans and tears.”

Read good books, but above all read the Holy Scriptures. Read them every day. O love the Bible, for it is the best of all books. Follow its directions, make it your guide in every difficulty, make it your companion in all your travels; never make a voyage on the water or a 293 journey on land without that precious book. Remember that the Bible is full of truth; it is excellent in all its parts.

“Precious Book, of books the best, Dearest gift of God but *one*, *That* surpasses all the rest, Gift of God's beloved Son.”

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Read it for instruction; it contains heavenly wisdom. The Bible will impress your minds, renew your hearts, enlighten your understandings, regulate your conduct, guide your actions, influence the choice of all your companions in life. It will increase your happiness here and hereafter. The more you read it, the more you will love it. It will be your support at death. O then, my dear children, do not forget to search the Scriptures, for they show the way to eternal life through Jesus Christ, and bear witness that he is the only Saviour of sinners.

IV. As this is the last time, I will mention some blessings which I hope you will enjoy. The best of all blessings is a new heart. This, God will give you if 25* 294 you ask him. Without this blessing you cannot be happy; without a new heart you cannot enter heaven.

The next blessing which I hope you will enjoy is, the teaching of the Holy Spirit. If you have him for your Teacher, you will be happy indeed.

Another blessing is, the love of Christ. If you love Jesus, he will love you, God will love you, angels will love you, good men will love you. If you are made the partakers of the grace of God, and taught by the Holy Spirit to see the evil of sin and your need of a Saviour, then I hope you will enjoy the pardon of sin: God is able, and will pardon you all for Christ's sake. Then, instead of a guilty conscience, instead of being afraid to die, you will long to go to heaven, and dwell with God and Jesus Christ, with all the holy angels, and all the good children that are there, forever and ever.

O that you may enjoy all the pleasures of early piety; that you may seek the Lord early and find him. You will never 295 repent of beginning to serve the Lord too soon.

"You can't too early serve the Lord, Nor learn too soon his fear; Nor prize too much his precious word, Or praise his name too dear."

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Now is your accepted time, now is the day of your salvation. The ways of the Lord are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths

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are paths of peace. O that you may enjoy all the blessings of the gospel, all the comforts of religion while you live, and eternal glory in the world to come. If therefore you wish to be happy, let me entreat you to be good. Think of these things. You must die; but *when*, you cannot tell, and if you die before you are partakers of the blessings I have now mentioned, you will be miserable forever

V. As this is the last time, there is one thing that I must warn you of. I shall not see you any more in this world. I shall see you again in the world to come. 296 I shall see you at the last day, at the bar of God. Remember this; there we shall meet again. Ah, my dear children, shall I see any of you at the left hand of the Judge? Shall I see any of the children that have attended these lectures driven down to hell? Shall I hear the Judge pronounce that awful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" O painful thought! God forbid that any of you should still remain careless and wicked, and at that day be doomed to eternal misery. Let it not be. Seek the Lord while he may be found; flee from the wrath to come; pray for a new heart and the pardon of your sins. Remember that you must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; you must give an account of the deeds done in the body. O that I may see you at the right hand of the Judge; that I may meet you with joy in heaven above. Remember that eternal misery will be the portion of wicked children.

297

And now, my dear children, *farewell*. May you fare well now, while you are young. God hath said, Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him, the reward of his hands shall be given him.

May you fare well when on your knees at a throne of grace. May you fare well when you read the Holy Scriptures. May you fare well when you are laid on a bed of affliction. When pain and anguish come upon you, then may God support you; may you find comfort in trusting to his promises and relying on his mercy; may his arms support you while walking

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through the dark valley of the shadow of death; then may you fear no evil. May it be well with you at your dying hour. O that you may leave the world with joy, and enter on that glorious rest above in a triumphant manner. May it be well with you at the day of judgment, when you stand before the great white throne. O that it may be well with you, and may you hear the Judge of all say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then shall you receive a harp of gold and a crown of glory, which shall be the reward of all that serve God and love his Son Jesus. There you will be forever before the throne of God, and dwell in his presence, where is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where are pleasures forevermore.

It has been suggested to me, by a pious friend, to appoint a certain day in every year, for you to think of the instructions that you have heard, and to pray for the little children in India. In order that you may remember, I shall, on the first day of May, in every year, set apart some portion of that day to think of and pray to God for the little children in America, and for you who have attended these monthly lectures in particular. Then will I plead with God, that he may bless you and cause his face to shine upon you, and that he will enable you to remember the instructions that you have heard. And I hope you will, on that day, pray for me, that I may be made useful to the dear children in that part of the world. It may not be amiss for you, on that day, to read this Farewell Address; it will help to put you in remembrance of what you have heard.

And now, my dear children, once more I bid you *farewell*. When we meet again, may it be in heaven. May God be your God, your guide even unto death. May he be your Father and Friend; may Jesus be your Saviour; may the Holy Spirit be your Teacher; may the Bible be your treasure and delight; may heaven be your eternal home, and everlasting happiness your endless reward. Amen.

"Come, children, hail the Prince of Peace, Obey the Saviour's call: Come, seek his face and taste his grace, And crown him Lord of all

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"Ye lambs of Christ, your tribute bring, Ye children, great and small; Hosannas sing to Christ your King, O! crown him Lord of all.

"This Jesus will your sins forgive; For you he drank the gall, For you he died, that you might live, To crown him Lord of all.

"Let every little girl and boy Who dwell upon this ball, Their tongues employ, with songs of joy, And crown him Lord of all.

"Ye angels, round his throne unite, While we before him fall; Ye saints, assist with all your might, To crown him Lord of all.

"Let all these children, Lord, be thine, When saved from Satan's thrall; Then we shall meet, at Jesus' feet, To crown him Lord of all."

THE END.

H 55. 78